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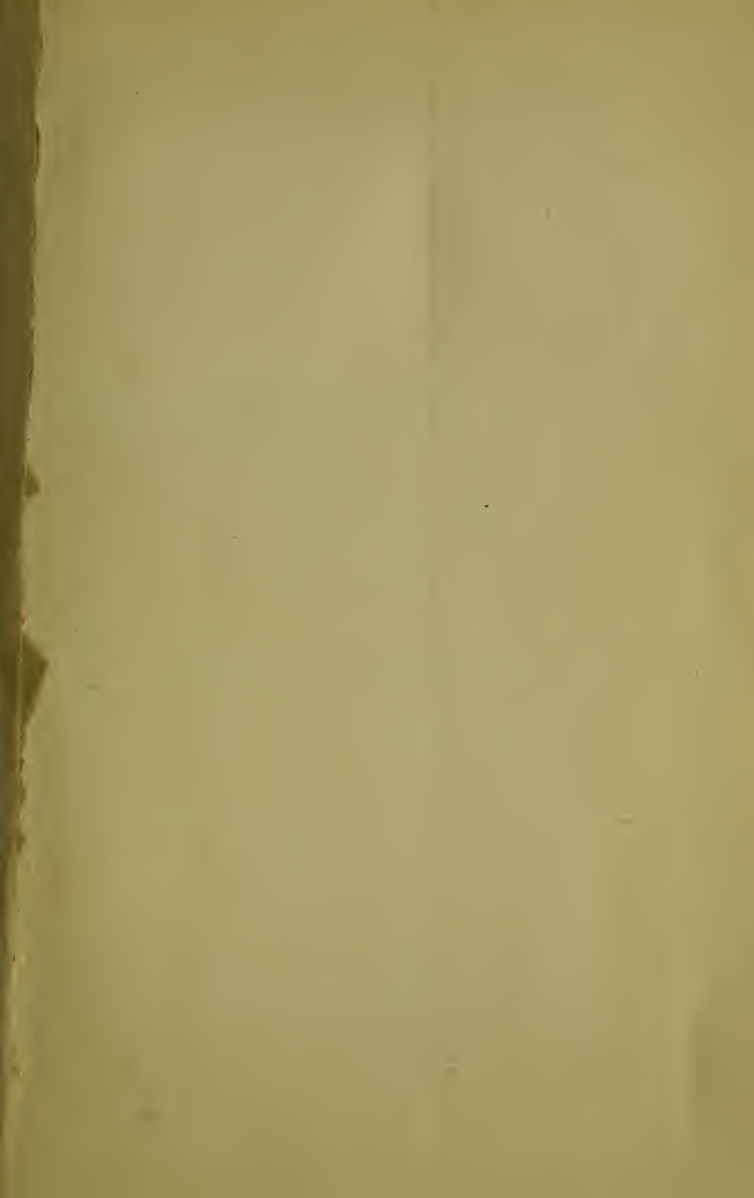
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The Cambridge Bible for Schools.

THE ACTS OF
THE APOSTLES
(I—XIV)



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The Cambridge Bible for Schools

GENERAL EDITOR:—J. J. S. PEROWNE, D.D.,
DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (I—XIV)

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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* * * The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.



INTRODUCTION TO PART I.

DESIGN OF THE AUTHOR.

THE writer of the Acts of the Apostles sets forth, in his introductory sentences, that the book is meant to be a continuation of a "former treatise." It is addressed to a certain "Theophilus," and since, among the other books of the New Testament, the third Gospel is written to a person of the same name, it is natural to take these compositions to be the work of the same author, and the unvarying tradition of antiquity has ascribed both works to St Luke. Leaving however, for the present, the consideration of this tradition, and turning to the contents of the book, we find that the author describes his earlier work as a "treatise of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up" (Acts i. 1, 2). This description accords exactly with the character and contents of St Luke's Gospel, and, moreover, the opening sentences of the Acts are an expansion and explanation of the closing sentences of that Gospel. They define more completely the "promise of the Father" there mentioned, they tell us how long the risen Jesus remained with His disciples; they describe the character of His communications during the forty days, and they make clear to us, what otherwise would have been difficult to understand, viz., how it came to pass that the disciples, when their Master had been taken from them, "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." When we read in the Acts of the two men in white apparel who testified to the desolate gazers that the departed Jesus was to come again as He had been seen to go into heaven, we can comprehend that they

would recall His words (John xiv. 28), "I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved me ye would *rejoice* because I said, I go unto the Father," and that they would be strengthened to act upon them.

Thus, from the way in which this second account of the Ascension supplements and explains the former brief notice in the Gospel, it seems natural to accept the Acts as a narrative written with the purpose of continuing the history of the Christian Church after Christ's ascension, in the same manner in which the history of Christ's own deeds had been set forth in the Gospel. Now the writer declares that his object in the first work had been to explain what "Jesus *began* to do and teach." He had not, any more than the other Evangelists, aimed at giving a complete life of Jesus, but only an explanation of those principles of His teaching, and those great acts in His life, on which the foundations of the new society were to be laid. If then the second book be meant to carry on the history in the same spirit in which it had been commenced, we shall expect to find in it no more than what the disciples *began* to do and teach when Jesus was gone away from them. And such unity of purpose, and consequently of treatment, is all the more to be looked for because both books are written to the same person.

That the Acts of the Apostles is a work of this character, a history of *beginnings* only, will be apparent from a very brief examination of its contents. We are told by the writer that Christ, before His ascension, marked out the course which should be taken in the publication of the Gospel. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Taking these words for his theme the author directs his labour to shew in what manner the teaching of the Apostles was *begun* in each of these appointed fields of labour, and he does no more. He mentions the eleven Apostles by name at the outset, to imply thereby that each one took his due share in the work of evangelization, though it will not come within the historian's purpose to describe that share. And with like brevity he relates how the Apostolic band was completed by the election of Matthias into

the place of Judas. This done, he turns to his proper theme, which is what Jesus *began* to do through the Spirit after His ascension. He tells us how the disciples, filled with the Holy Ghost, preached in Jerusalem until it was declared by the lips of their adversaries (Acts v. 28) that the city was filled with their doctrine. After this *commencement* we hear but little of the work done in Jerusalem. The author's next step is to relate how from the Holy City the mission of the disciples was extended into Judæa and Samaria. To make this intelligible he found it needful to describe with some detail the events which led to the death of Stephen, and before that to point out the position which the first martyr held in the new society. And as the defence which Stephen made before the Jewish rulers forms what may be called the Apology to the Jews for the universalism of Christianity, we have the argument of that speech given at some length. The time had arrived when the Gospel was to be published to others than Jews, and we can see from the charges laid against Stephen that this further spread of their labours had been dwelt upon in the addresses of the Christian teachers. Blasphemous words spoken against the Temple and the Law would be but a vague accusation were it not explained by the defence which was made in reply to it. From this defence we can see that the provocation which had roused the Jews against Stephen was the doctrine that God was the God not of the Jew only, but also of the Gentile, and that His worship was no longer to be restricted to any particular locality as heretofore. To prove to his hearers that this was shewn in their own history and taught by their own prophets, Stephen points out that it was not in the Holy Land, to which they attached such sanctity, that God first appeared to Abraham, but in Mesopotamia; that God was with him also in Haran, and that when He had brought "the father of the faithful" into Canaan, He gave no permanent possession therein either to him or to his descendants for many generations. Yet though the people of Israel were for a long time strangers in Egypt God was with them there. He blessed them so that they multiplied exceedingly, and manifested His constant care of them in their slavery until at last He sent them a deliverer in

Moses. This prophet God had trained first in Pharaoh's court and then in the land of Midian, and had manifested His presence to him in a special manner in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, and all these tokens of God's care for His people had been shewn without any preference on the part of Jehovah for one place above another.

The mention of Moses leads the speaker into a brief digression, in which he compares the rebellious behaviour of the Israelites towards their deliverer, with the hostile disposition of the Jews towards Jesus. But he soon resumes the thread of his argument, and points out that the Tabernacle, and with it the visible sign of God's presence among His chosen people, was moving from place to place for forty years in the wilderness, and that when the people came into Canaan there was no thought of a fixed abode for the Tabernacle until the days of David: that then God did not at once permit the building of the Temple which that king designed to raise, and when Solomon was allowed to build God's house, yet, as Stephen reminds his hearers, the voices of their prophets still testified that the Most High did not dwell in temples made with hands, but sat in heaven, while earth was as His footstool, and that He was the Maker and Preserver not of one race, but of all men. This language, enforcing, from a review of their own history and prophecies, the position which Stephen had taken up, in the defence of the new doctrine, and rather going beyond, than defending himself against, the accusation of his opponents, roused their indignation, and, apparently perceiving this, the speaker concludes his defence not with a peroration, but with a solemn rebuke, in which he says that, with all their zeal for the Law, they have not kept the true spirit of that heaven-sent deposit of which they had been made the guardians. Provoked still more by such a declaration the crowd breaks out into a furious rage, and by stoning Stephen and persecuting all who adhered to his cause, endeavours to stop the spread of the Christian doctrines, but these persecutions become the cause of a still wider propagation of the new teaching and effect the very object to which the Jews were so strongly opposed.

This is the longest speech contained in the Acts, and the great prominence given to it by the author seems to harmonize with what we judge to be his general design. For this address was the first defence of the wider extension of the preaching of the disciples, and on such an initiatory stage of the movement it is after the author's manner to dwell.

He next proceeds with the history of the propagation of Christ's doctrine in Judæa and Samaria, and as if to indicate at once that the message was now to be spread to the farthest corners of the earth, Philip's mission to the Ethiopian eunuch is mentioned that we may be informed concerning the firstfruits of the faith in Africa; but the story is carried no farther, nor have we any after-record concerning Philip, except the notice (xxi. 8) which seems to imply that he made his home for the future in Cæsarea, where the population would be mainly Gentiles.

Saul's conversion and Peter's visit to Cornelius may be called companion pictures meant to display the two lines of activity by which the conversion of the Gentiles was to be brought about. The one mission, initiated by St Peter, was to those among the heathen who, like the centurion of Cæsarea, had been already led to some imperfect knowledge of God, through the study of the Jewish Scriptures. On the other hand the great Apostle of the Gentiles was sent forth to his allotted work among those who were to be turned (Acts xiv. 15) "from their vanities to serve the living God which made heaven and earth and all things therein."

As soon as Peter's share in the *beginning* of this mission is concluded, and he has twice testified concerning it (xi. 4—17, xv. 7—11) that his action had been prompted by a Divine revelation, and that the propriety of what he had done was confirmed by the witness of the Holy Spirit, our historian dismisses him, the most energetic of the original twelve, from his narrative, because the other *beginnings* of Gospel-preaching among the heathen can be better explained by following the career of St Paul, the chief pioneer of the Christian faith as it spread to the ends of the earth. Still through the whole of what is related concerning the labours of that Apostle, we learn only of the founding of Churches and societies, and the initial steps of

the Christian work in the places which he visited. We have no attempt made to write a history of St Paul, any more than of St Peter, for as soon as we have heard that the message of the Gospel has been published first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles in the empire-city of the world in that age, the author pauses from his labour: he has completed the task which he undertook: he has described what Jesus, through His messengers, *began* to do and teach, after His ascension into heaven.

THE TITLE.

It will be clear from what has been already said, that the title, by which the book is known to us, can hardly have been given to it by its author. The work is certainly not "The Acts of the Apostles." There is no detailed account of the work of any of the Apostles except Peter and Paul. John is mentioned on three occasions, but he appears rather as the companion of Peter than as the doer of any special act by himself. Of James the son of Zebedee we have no notice except of his execution by Herod, while much more space is devoted to Stephen and Philip, who were not Apostles, than to him, and the same remark applies to the notices of Timothy and Silas. We may conclude then that the title, as we have it, was a later addition. The author (Acts i. 1) calls the Gospel "a treatise" (λόγος), a term the most general that could be used; and if that work were styled by him "the first treatise," the Acts would most naturally receive the title of "the second treatise." Or it may be that the form of title given in the *Cod. Sinaiticus* was its first appellation. There the book is called simply "Acts," and for a while that designation might have been sufficient to distinguish it from other books. But it was not long before treatises came into circulation concerning the doings of individual Apostles and Bishops, and these were known by such titles as "The Acts of Peter and Paul," "The Acts of Timothy," "The Acts of Paul and Thecla," &c. It would become necessary, as such literature increased and was circulated, to enlarge the title of this original volume of "Acts," and from such exigency we find in various MSS. different titles,

such as "Acts of the Apostles," "Acting of Apostles," "Acts of all the Apostles," "Acts of the Holy Apostles," with still longer additions in MSS. of later date.

THE AUTHOR.

All the traditions of the early Church impute the authorship of the Acts to the writer of the third Gospel, and Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* II. 11) says, "Luke, by race a native of Antioch and by profession a physician, having associated mainly with Paul and having companied with the rest of the Apostles less closely, has left us examples of that healing of souls which he acquired from them in two inspired books, the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles." Eusebius lived about 325 A.D. Before his time Tertullian, A.D. 200, speaks (*De jejuniis*, 10) of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and of Peter going up to the housetop to pray, as facts mentioned in the commentary of Luke. Also (*De baptismo*, 10) he says, "We find in the Acts of the Apostles that they who had received the baptism of John had not received the Holy Ghost, of which indeed they had not even heard." Similar quotations could be drawn from Clement of Alexandria, a little anterior to Tertullian, and also from Irenæus, who wrote about A.D. 190. The earliest clear quotation from the Acts is contained in a letter preserved by Eusebius (*H. E.* v. 2) from the Churches in the south of Gaul to the Christians of Asia and Phrygia, written A.D. 177, concerning the persecutions of the Church in Gaul. Alluding to some who had been martyred there, the writers say, "They prayed for those who arranged their torments as did Stephen, that perfect martyr, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'" In still earlier writings there may be allusions to the Acts, but they are not sufficiently distinct to warrant their insertion as quotations. But in the scarcity of writings at this early period we need not be surprised if a century elapsed after the writing of the book before we can discover traces of its general circulation. It was probably completed, as we shall see, between A.D. 60—70, and if in a hundred years from that time the Christians of Europe can quote

from it as a book well known to their brethren in Asia, we may feel quite sure that it had been in circulation, and generally known among Christians, for a large portion of the intervening century. Modern critics have doubted the existence of the Acts at the date when this letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons was written, and have argued thus: "The tradition of St Stephen's martyrdom, and the memory of his noble sayings, may well have remained in the Church, or have been recorded in writings then current, from one of which indeed eminent critics conjecture that the author of Acts derived his materials¹." As if it were easier to admit on conjecture the existence of writings for which no particle of evidence is forthcoming, than to allow, in agreement with most ancient tradition, that "the Acts" was composed at the date to which, on the face of his work, the writer lays claim.

In his book the author makes no mention of himself by name, though in the latter part of his narrative he very frequently employs the pronoun "we," intimating thereby that he was present at the events which in that portion of his work he is describing. But as these personal portions of his story fall almost entirely within the latter half of the book, it will be more convenient to postpone an examination of them for the present. We may however notice, as evidence of St Luke's companionship with St Paul, which is implied by the manner of his speech in the Acts, that in the Epistle to Philemon, probably written from Rome during St Paul's first imprisonment there (Acts xxviii. 11—31), the writer sends to Philemon the salutation of Luke (ver. 24) as one of his fellow-labourers. So in the Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 14) he is mentioned as "Luke the beloved physician," and again in a later Epistle (2 Tim. iv. 11) we find St Paul saying, "Only Luke is with me."

That "the beloved physician" was the writer both of the Gospel and of the Acts may perhaps also be inferred from the use which the author makes of technical medical terms in his description of diseases, as in the account of Simon's wife's mother (Luke iv. 38), in the story of the woman with the issue of blood

¹ *Supernatural Religion*, III. 25.

(viii. 43, 44) and in his narration of the agony of Christ (xxii. 44). Also in the description of the cripple at the Temple gate (Acts iii. 7), in the notice of the death of Herod Agrippa (xii. 23), and when he writes of the blindness of Elymas (xiii. 11), and of the sickness of Publius in Melita (xxviii. 8). A comparison of the Greek phraseology of the Gospel and of the Acts leads also to the conclusion that the two books are from the same hand. It should further be noticed that there are more than fifty words used in the Gospel and in the Acts which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

This work, as well as the Gospel, being anonymous, attempts have been made to refer the authorship to some other person than St Luke, seeing that it is only assigned to him by tradition, and his name never appears in the story as do the names of other actors in the work. Some critics have suggested that Timothy was the author of those sections in which the plural pronoun "we" occurs, because in the letters addressed to the Corinthians, Thessalonians and Philippians, St Paul mentions Timothy with great affection as his fellow-preacher. It is argued that whoever wrote the narrative of the Acts must have been in very close relation to St Paul at the time when he visited Corinth and Thessalonica and Philippi, and that the name of such a man would not have been omitted, at all events, from the opening greetings of all these Epistles. But we can see from Acts xx. 4—5 that there was an intimate companion of St Paul, who for some reason remained at his side when the others could leave him, and who there states expressly that he was with the Apostle when Timothy had gone away. And the suggestion of those who think that Luke the physician was taken with him by St Paul because of the bodily infirmities under which the Apostle laboured, and that it is in this capacity, rather than as a fellow-preacher, that St Luke was in such close attendance during the missionary journeys, is worthy of consideration. If this were so, Luke, though the writer of the diary, yet would not come so prominently before the Churches in the various cities which were visited, as those companions of St Paul who were fellow-missionaries, and this would explain why

he is omitted in the greetings of the letters afterwards written by St Paul to the newly-founded congregations. Moreover, the physician would be the one person who would naturally remain in attendance, when the fellow-preachers had gone forth on their several ways.

Nor is there any better ground for supposing, as some have done, that Silas is the narrator who writes in the first person. We have only to look at Acts xv. 22, where, in the portion of the narrative which, according to this hypothesis, must have been written by Silas, he is spoken of as a "chief man among the brethren," to see that Silas could not be the writer of such a notice concerning himself.

And the argument which would make Silas (i.e. *Silvanus*), and Luke (i.e. *Lucanus*), two names belonging to one and the same person, because the one is derived from *silva*=a wood, and the other from *lucus*=a grove, and so their sense is cognate, does not merit much consideration. It is said in support of this view that Silas and Luke are never mentioned together. But it is plain from the story of the preaching and arrest of Paul and Silas at Philippi, that the writer who there speaks in the first person plural was a different person from Silas (cf. Acts xvi. 16—19). And with regard to the cognate signification of the two names it should be borne in mind that when such double appellations were given to the same person they were not derived from the same language. *Cephas* and *Thomas* are Aramaic, while *Peter* and *Didymus* are Greek. But *Silvanus* and *Lucanus* have both a Latin origin.

With still less ground has it been suggested that Titus was the author of these personal sections and that some later writer incorporated them in his work. Titus was with St Paul in his missionary journeys, as we know from the second Epistle to the Corinthians, but to accept him as author of "the Acts" would be to prefer a theory of modern invention before the tradition which, though not capable of exact verification, has the voice of long antiquity in its favour. We are therefore inclined to give the weight which it deserves to the ancient opinion, and to accept the traditional view of the origin of both the Gospel and the

Acts, rather than any of the modern suppositions, which are very difficult to be reconciled with the statements in the Acts and the Epistles, and which are the mere offspring of critical imaginations.

DATE OF THE WORK.

That the writer was one who lived amid the events with which he deals will be clear to any one who will consider how he connects his narrative with contemporary history, and that in no case can he be proved to have fallen into error. The investigation of the whole of this question concerning the connection of the Acts with contemporary history cannot be undertaken till the notes to the latter chapters have been written. But in the fourteen chapters here printed, we find the writer speaking of Gamaliel (Acts v. 34) exactly as what we know from other sources about that doctor of the Law would lead us to expect a contemporary to speak. In the same place he deals with historical events in connection with Theudas and Judas, and it has been shewn in the notes that there is great probability that in all he says he is correct, for he speaks of the latter of these rebels with more exactness than is found in Josephus, while the former has probably been unnamed by that writer because the rebellion in which Theudas was concerned was comprised under the general description that he gives of the numerous outbreaks with which Judæa was at that time disturbed.

Again, the writer of the Acts brings Cæsarea before us exactly in the condition in which we know it to have been under Roman government in the period before the destruction of Jerusalem. He alludes (xi. 28) to the famine in the days of Claudius Cæsar, in language which only one who had personal knowledge of the event would have used. He gives a notice of Herod Agrippa which accords with Josephus in most minute details, and which shews that the writer of the description was most intimately acquainted with the circumstances which attended that monarch's death. In his mention of Cyprus he makes it clear by the designation which he uses for the Roman governor

of that island that he was conversant with all the circumstances of its government, which had but recently undergone a change, as is pointed out in the notes on St Paul's visit to Cyprus. But it is in the frequent notices of Jerusalem that the most cogent evidence is to be found for the date of the writer. That city was destroyed by the Romans A.D. 70, but in the whole of the Acts there is no single word to indicate that the author of this book knew anything of that event or even of the causes whose operation brought it about. The city is always mentioned as still in its grandeur; the Temple services and sacrifices continue to be observed; at the great feasts the crowds of strangers assemble as the Law enjoined, and among its population the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees act the same parts which they do in the Gospel histories; localities such as Solomon's porch, and the field Akeldama, are spoken of as though still existing and as well-marked spots; the synagogues erected in the city for the foreign Jews are mentioned, and the writer speaks of them as places which would be well known to his readers. Annas and Caiaphas are to him no characters removed by long years of past history, but recent holders of office in the city which was still standing in all security. These features, so many and so various, of contemporary knowledge mark the Acts as a book which must have been written before the overthrow of Jerusalem, and as the narrative terminates about the year 63 A.D., we conclude that its composition must have been completed very soon after that date, and probably not later than A.D. 66. About the latter year St Paul was martyred at Rome, and had the writer of the Acts known of that event it is very difficult to imagine that he would have made no allusion to it in such passages as those in which the Apostle declares his expectation of death and his readiness to suffer in the cause of Christ.

But not only does the writer of the Acts move easily in his narrative as if amid contemporary history, and give notices of persons and places like one to whom actual experience in what he writes about makes his footing sure, but he has also left an undesigned testimony to the date at which he wrote in the character of his narrative. We know that before the end of the

first century the Christian Church was troubled by the rise of much false doctrine. In the New Testament we have a few allusions to false teachers, as when it is said of Hymenæus and Alexander (1 Tim. i. 19, 20) that they "have made shipwreck concerning the faith," and (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18) of Hymenæus and Philetus, that they "have erred concerning the truth." But from other sources we learn much more than from Holy Writ concerning these first heretical teachers. The earliest and most prominent among them were the Gnostics, who derived their name from the pretensions which they made to superior knowledge. This knowledge, as they taught, distinguished the more elevated among mankind from the vulgar, for whom faith and traditional opinion were said to be sufficient. These teachers also perverted the Scriptures by great license in the use of allegorical explanation; they held that from God had emanated generations of spiritual beings, whom they named *Æons*, and who, from the description given of them, are seen to be impersonations of the Divine attributes. By the Gnostics matter was declared to be evil, but superior knowledge could enable men either by asceticism to become superior to it, or if they indulged in excesses, to do so without harm. These heretics also denied the resurrection of the body. One of their number, Cerinthus, taught that Christ was one of the *Æons*, and that he descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism, and gave him the power of working miracles, but departed from him before his crucifixion. There were many other forms assumed by their various heretical doctrines, but what has been said will be a sufficient notice of their character for us to see how free from all knowledge of such speculations was the writer of the Acts. He mentions the opposition of the Judaizing Christians, those of the Circumcision, and he records in many places the violent assaults made on the first missionaries by those sections of the heathen population who saw that the spread of Christianity would interfere with their sources of gain, but of Gnosticism in any of its phases he has never a word, though that kind of teaching was widely spread before the end of the first century. It is therefore to be believed that his history was composed before such heretical

teaching had spread or even made itself much known, or else we must suppose that the writer, though aware of the existence of all these errors, has yet been able to compile a narrative of the early years of the Church without giving us a hint of what had been developed within her at the time when he wrote. He has brought forward St Paul speaking at Miletus (xx. 29, 30), "I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" and yet on such a passage he has given no sign that the words of the Apostle had been exactly verified. To suppose that the writer could thus compose his book and never shew that he knew of the later course of the history of the Church, if he did know of it, is quite as difficult as to conceive that he was aware of the overthrow of the Holy City, and yet, though making mention of Jerusalem almost in every chapter, he has never let fall a word in which he intimates his knowledge that the city no longer existed. The only safe conclusion to which a consideration of these characteristics of the Acts can lead us is that the author wrote as he has done because, at the time when he was writing, Gnosticism had not been spread abroad, nor was Jerusalem destroyed.

The absence of any allusions to the writings of St Paul in the Acts is a piece of the same kind of evidence for the early date of its composition. Many of the Pauline Epistles were no doubt written and in the possession of those Churches to which they were addressed before the composition of the Acts, but they had not yet been widely circulated, and so were probably unknown to St Luke. There are, however, some points in the history, which he has given us, that derive support from the Epistles, and all the more because the two compositions were independent of one another. The fuller notice of these points of corroboration will be properly reserved for the more complete Introduction when the journeys of St Paul have all been examined, but even in this first part of the Acts there are some features which deserve to be mentioned. The provision for widows, alluded to Acts vi. 1, was a new feature of social obligation intro-

duced by Christianity. In the narrative of St Luke we are shewn that this was one of the earliest cares of the infant Church, and that it even took precedence of all that we now embrace under the name of public worship. Consonant with this part of the early Christian organization are the regulations given by St Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 9) concerning provision for the widows in the Church over which he was to preside. Again the historian gives in several places the account of Saul's conversion after he had been a persecutor of the Christians; in entire accord with this the Apostle speaks of himself (1 Tim. i. 13) as "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," but as having "obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief." St Paul tells of his escape from Damascus (2 Cor. xi. 32) in language which agrees with what we read in the Acts (ix. 23—25). In like manner he makes mention (Gal. i. 18) of his visit to Jerusalem to see Peter and James exactly as St Luke mentions it in the history (Acts ix. 28). We learn from the Acts (xii. 17) that James was president of the Church in Jerusalem, and with that agrees the testimony of St Paul (Gal. ii. 9), while the persecutions which the Apostle underwent in Lystra, Antioch and Iconium, of which the historian speaks at some length (Acts xiii., xiv.), are mentioned by St Paul when he is writing to Timothy, a native of Lystra (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11), as matters about which the latter had full knowledge. Such coincidences of testimony in works written independently of each other are of the highest value, and could only be found in writings produced by persons who wrote from direct personal knowledge. So that we are in this way brought to the conclusion that the narrative of the Acts was composed before the time when the Epistles of St Paul had been brought into circulation. For there is in the history no notice of the letters, and yet the details betoken the same freshness, and closeness to the events of which they speak, as is seen in the confessedly contemporary allusions made by St Paul in his Epistles. There can, therefore, be no great difference in their date of composition between the Epistles to Timothy and St Luke's account in the Acts of the Apostles.

A consideration of these various features of the Acts,—that the writer makes mention of contemporary secular history as one who was living among the events of which he speaks; that in his work we find no indication that he knew of the fall of Jerusalem; that he displays no acquaintance with the heretical tenets which were rife before the end of the first century; that he makes no reference to any of St Paul's Epistles, though writing as one fully conversant with the missionary-travels of that Apostle,—forces us to the conclusion that the work was written at some time between A. D. 63 and A. D. 70, and most probably about midway between these dates.

THE SOURCES OF THE NARRATIVE.

In the preface to the Gospel of St Luke the writer states definitely that the information which he is about to record for Theophilus was derived from those “which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.” And as he himself was certainly not a disciple of Christ from the first, it was necessary that in the earlier treatise he should consult others, and it may have been needful to do so for the greater portion of what he has there written. But in the later book the sources of his information are not necessarily of exactly the same kind as for the Gospel. So that the preface of the Gospel need not be taken as having reference to the Acts likewise; and it is manifest from the passages in which the author in the Acts speaks in the first person plural that he meant to imply that he was himself an eye-witness of the events which he is there describing. But these parts of his narrative do not (with the exception of one doubtful passage (xiv. 22)) fall within the first half of the book, and therefore the consideration of them may most fitly be delayed. But as regards the earlier portion of the Acts, what has been said in the notes on iii. 8 of the graphic character of the language there used, and of its similarity in style to the Gospel of St Mark, the vivid narratives of which have much in common with the acknowledged language

of St Peter, it seems not improbable that the account of the events at and after the Ascension and of the spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem (Acts i.—v.) may have been drawn directly or indirectly from that Apostle's information. We may also ascribe to the same source all those portions of the narrative in which St Peter plays a conspicuous part, and of which the language is markedly of one character. Such portions would include ix. 32—xi. 18 and also xii. 1—19, much of which could have come in the first instance from no other lips than those of Peter himself. From some member of the Hellenistic party, of whom St Luke would meet many during his travels with St Paul, (just as we know (xxi. 8) that he dwelt with Philip the Evangelist many days at Cæsarea,) our author probably drew the whole of that portion of his narrative which relates to the appointment of the deacons and the accusation, defence, and death of Stephen (vi.—vii.), as well as those notices of the after movements of the Hellenistic missionaries (viii. 1—40, xi. 19—30, xii. 25) which are found at intervals in the history.

The narrative of Saul's conversion (ix. 1—30) must have been told by himself, and after xiii. 1 the remainder of the book deals exclusively with the labours of that Apostle, and as the writer had abundant opportunities while journeying with St Paul of hearing all the history of his life before he became his companion, we cannot suppose that he has recorded anything of St Paul's doings except what was derived from the information of that Apostle or his fellow-labourers.

There remain the two historic notices (1) of the rest experienced by the Churches of Judæa and Galilee and Samaria (ix. 31) and (2) of the death of Herod Agrippa (xii. 20—23); but of these, if, as we have endeavoured to shew, he were living amidst the events of which he writes, the author would be aware from his personal knowledge; and the natural manner in which both these incidents are introduced indicates how well the writer knew that for his Christian readers as well as for himself a slight hint would recall the bypast trials of Christ's Church.

This introductory notice of the Acts must necessarily remain incomplete till the notes on the remaining chapters are published,

when a fuller discussion can be given to many points which are now only slightly alluded to.

In the transliteration of Hebrew words in the notes, all that has been aimed at is to guide the English reader to a correct pronunciation of the word represented. Such inconsistencies as are found in these English representations will no doubt be set down by those who observe them to their true cause.

I desire to acknowledge the great help which I have derived, in the illustration of such Jewish manners and customs as are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, from the learning and guidance of my friend Dr Schiller-Szinessy.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

I—14. *Link connecting this book with St Luke's Gospel.
Detailed account of the Ascension.*

THE former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all 1
that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in 2

I. 1—14. LINK CONNECTING THIS BOOK WITH ST LUKE'S
GOSPEL. DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENSION.

The Title. According to the best MSS. this should be simply "Acts of Apostles." The *Cod. Sin.* gives only "Acts." The former of these titles, while having most authority, also most fitly describes the character of the composition. The book is not *The Acts of the Apostles*, but merely *some Acts of certain Apostles* which are related by the author, intermixed with the acts of others among the Christian community, where such additions were needful to make the story clear. The writer tells us in the introduction how Christ, when ascending in glory, declared what should be the course which His doctrine should take in its extension, "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8). To describe the fulfilment of this departing prophecy is that on which the whole book is engaged. It is natural, therefore, to find that the two chief actors are the energetic Peter, and, after his conversion, the enthusiastic Apostle of the Gentiles. But even they are only used as representative characters. The writer does not aim at giving us full details of the work of either of these Apostles. We see most of Peter and John while the preaching is confined to Jerusalem, but the narrative leaves them to recount some acts of Philip, because he was the pioneer of the Gospel in Samaria. Peter is again brought before us engaged in preaching in Judæa and Samaria and confirming the work which Philip and his companions had begun; and because the conversion of Cornelius was the beginning of the proclamation of Christ's message beyond the Jewish race, we have a full account of St Peter's mission to this first Gentile convert and of the debate which arose among the Jews in consequence. But when Peter has been present at the council of Jerusalem, at which was finally settled the relation between the Jews and Gentiles who became Christians, we lose sight of him, and the further spread of the Gospel is summarized in a description of some of the labours of St Paul; and when he has reached the

which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he shewed himself alive after

capital of the west, to shew us that the writer contemplated no biography of St Paul, the history comes to what some have thought an abrupt close. But the writer's task was done when he had told how the great Apostle brought Christ's message to the capital of the Gentile world. See *Introduction*.

1. *The former treatise*] In the original we have the superlative adjective used, but the idiom which speaks of the *first* of two is common to Greek with many other languages. An example is found 1 Cor. xiv. 30. So Cicero, *de Inventione*, in his second book (chap. III.) calls the former book *primus liber*.

treatise] The original (λόγος) indicates rather an inartistic narrative than a history. It is a book more like a piece of Herodotus than Thucydides.

have I made] Better, **I made**. The time is indefinite, and we have no warrant in the text for that closer union of the two books, in point of date, which is made by the language of the A. V.

Theophilus] Nothing is known of the person to whom St Luke addresses both his Gospel and the Acts, but the adjective "most excellent" applied to him in Luke i. 3 is the same which is used in addressing Felix in a letter and in a speech (Acts xxiii. 26, xxiv. 3), and Festus (Acts xxvi. 25) in a speech; from which we are perhaps warranted in concluding that Theophilus was a person of rank, and it may be a Roman officer. Josephus uses the same word in addressing Epaphroditus, to whom he dedicates the account of his life (Vit. Josephi, *ad fin.*). The suggestion that Theophilus (=lover of God) is a name adopted by the writer to indicate any believer, is improbable. Such personification is unlike the rest of Scripture, and is not supported by evidence.

began] for the Gospel is not a history of all that Jesus did, but only an account of the foundations which He laid and on which the Church should afterwards be built. So this book is still an account of what the Lord does and teaches from heaven.

to do and teach] As in the Gospel (Luke xxiv. 19) the disciples call Jesus "a prophet mighty in deed and in word." The acts and life spake first, and then the tongue.

2. *the day in which he was taken up*] The Gospel of St Luke closes with a very brief notice of the Ascension: of which event fuller details are given in this chapter, so as to form a connection between the two treatises and to indicate the purpose with which the latter was written. See below on v. 8.

through the Holy Ghost] That the whole institution of the Christian Church might be Divine. The Spirit of the Lord was upon the Anointed Jesus in this as in His other works and words. Cp. Luke iv. 18.

3. *after his passion*] Literally, **after he had suffered**.

his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the *things* pertaining to the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, ⁴ commanded them that *they* should not depart from Jerusa-

by many infallible proofs] The adjective here has no representative in the original. The Greek word signifies some sign or token manifest to the senses, as opposed to evidence given by witnesses. The word *infallible* has been used in the A. V. to bring out this signification. It is better to omit it. The proofs here meant are Christ's speaking, walking and eating with His disciples on several occasions after His resurrection, and giving to Thomas and the rest the clearest demonstration that He was with them in the same real body as before His death, and not in appearance only (Luke xxiv. 39, 43; John xx. 27, xxi. 13). As the verity of the Resurrection would be the basis of all the Apostolic preaching, it was necessary that such clear proofs as these should be given by Christ to the twelve who were to be His witnesses.

being seen of them forty days] Better, **appearing unto them by the space of forty days**. Christ was not continuously with the disciples, but shewed Himself to them frequently at intervals during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. The period of forty days is only mentioned here, and it has been alleged as a discrepancy between the Gospel of St Luke and the Acts that the former (Luke xxiv.) represents the Ascension as taking place on the same day as the Resurrection. It needs very little examination to disperse such an idea. The two disciples there mentioned (*v.* 13) were at Emmaus "towards evening" on the day of Christ's resurrection; they returned to Jerusalem that night and told what they had seen. But after this has been stated the chapter is broken up at *v.* 36 (which a comparison with John (xx. 26—28) shews to be an account of what took place eight days after the Resurrection), and at *vv.* 44 and 50, into three distinct sections with no necessary marks of time to unite them, and in the midst of the whole we are told that Christ opened the mind of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures. No reasonable person would conclude that all this was done in one day. Beside which the objectors prove too much, for according to their reasoning the Ascension must have taken place at night after the two disciples had come again to Jerusalem from Emmaus.

the kingdom of God] This expression is found most frequently in the last three Evangelists, St Matthew's form being "the kingdom of heaven." It has several significations, but here, as in Mark i. 14, it includes the whole Christian dispensation, its message, progress and economy. Some traces of the nature of these communications in the forty days we find in the Gospels. The disciples were sent as Christ Himself was sent (John xx. 21), their understandings were opened that they might understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45); the extent of their commission was set before them, as well as the solemn issues of their work (Mark xvi. 15, 16), and to that was added the promise of their Lord's constant presence (Matt. xxviii. 20).

lem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*,
 5 ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water ;
 but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many
 6 days hence. When they therefore were come together, they
 asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore
 7 again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is
 not for you to know *the times or the seasons*, which the
 8 Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive

4. *not depart from Jerusalem*] This injunction is only mentioned by St Luke (xxiv. 49). The importance of their keeping together until the Holy Ghost was given is clear. It would thus be made more manifest that, though hereafter scattered abroad, their inspiration was supplied from one common source. To the Jews, to whom the Apostles were first to speak, this would appeal, because their own prophet (Isa. ii. 3) had said “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

ye have heard of me] This promise is alluded to (Luke xxiv. 49) and found in St John (xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26), “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things,” &c. “He shall testify of me.” Thus were they to be prepared as witnesses for Christ.

5. *ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*] Thus was now to be fulfilled that of which John the Baptist had spoken (Matt. iii. 11), “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Such an event, when it came to pass, could not fail to work mightily on the minds of those among Christ’s Apostles who had been disciples of John, as Andrew had been (John i. 40), and probably some of the others.

6. *wilt thou... restore*] Literally, *dost thou restore* (or *art thou restoring*), but the English future gives the sense.

the kingdom to Israel] The question was asked when all the Apostles were gathered together, so that the enquiry was not dictated by the mistaken notion of some single member. It shews, as do many other remarks and questions (cp. Luke xxiv. 21, &c.), how far the Apostles were even yet from comprehending the spirituality and universality of the work to which Christ was sending them. A temporal kingdom confined to Israel is what they still contemplate. The change from the spirit which dictated the question in this verse, to that in which St Peter (Acts ii. 38, 39) preached repentance and forgiveness to all whom the Lord should call, is one of the greatest evidences of the miracle of Pentecost. Such changes can only come from above.

7. *It is not for you, &c.*] During the tutelage, as it may be called, of His disciples, our Lord constantly avoided giving a direct answer to enquiries which they addressed to Him. He checked in this way their tendency to speculate on the future, and drew their minds to their duty in the present. Cp. John xxi. 21, 22.

in his own power] The word here rendered *power* is not the same as

power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these *things*, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went *up*, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why

that so rendered in the following verse. The sense of this first word is "absolute disposal," and we might well render it **authority**.

8. *ye shall receive power*] Something different from the profitless speculations to which they had just desired an answer, even "a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries could neither gainsay nor resist" (Luke xxi. 15). Thus would they be enabled to become Christ's witnesses.

in Jerusalem, and in all Judea] To which district all the ministrations of the Apostles were confined till the death of Stephen.

and in Samaria] Whither the first who went with authority was Philip, one of the seven (Acts viii. 5), and afterwards Peter and John.

and unto the uttermost part of the earth] Commenced by the preaching of Paul, Barnabas, Mark, Silas and Timothy, and regarded as placed on a secure footing when St Paul was once brought into the capital city of the world.

The writer keeps before him from first to last the promise contained in this verse, and leaves out of his narrative all that does not tend to illustrate its fulfilment. The work of every agent is followed so far as he is used to bring about this result and no farther. This will be noticed at each stage as we proceed, and it will be seen that it explains why among "Acts of Apostles" some works are included which were not carried on by Apostles, and why the histories of the chief agents are left incomplete.

9. *while they beheld*] That they might have as clear proof of His Ascension as they had received of the reality of His Resurrection, He is taken from them while they are still gazing on Him and with His words yet sounding in their ears. In the Gospel (xxiv. 51) it is "while He blessed them." From the narrative in this place the witnesses of the Ascension seem to have been only the eleven, and this is stated expressly in St Mark's Gospel (xvi. 14), so that although in St Luke's Gospel (xxiv. 33) the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus are related to have come unto the eleven to report what they had seen, we are not to conclude that they remained with them during all the other events recorded in that chapter, an additional evidence that that chapter relates to events which happened in the course of several days and not all in close sequence on the same day. Cp. i. 3, note.

10. *as he went up*] The preposition is not in the Greek, which has simply, *as he went*.

in white apparel] They are called *men*, but they are evidently angels.

stand ye gazing up into heaven? this *same* Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in* like manner
 12 as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they
 unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from
 13 Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were

So the two angels are clothed in white (John xx. 12) whom Mary saw in the sepulchre after the Resurrection, and one of these is called by St Mark (xvi. 5) "a young *man* clothed in a long white garment." St Luke in the Gospel calls them "two men in shining garments" (xxiv. 4). So the "man in bright clothing," Acts x. 30, is described in xi. 13 as "an angel." This was a common Jewish expression to signify angelic or divine messengers. Cf. Talm. Jer. *Foma* v. 2, *ad fin.*

"Shimeon ha-Tsaddik (i. e. the righteous) served Israel forty years in the High-priesthood, and in the last year he said to the people, 'In this year I shall die.' They said to him: 'How dost thou know this?' He said to them: 'Every year when I was going into the Holy of Holies there was an Ancient one, *clad in white garments and with a white vail*, who went in with me and came out with me; but this year he went in with me and did not come out with me.' [On this matter] they asked of Rabbi Abuhu, 'But surely it is written: 'Nothing of mankind shall be in the tent of meeting when he [the High-priest] goes in to make atonement until his coming out again,' not even those concerning whom it is written [Ezek. i. 5] 'They had *the likeness of a man*,' even they shall not be in the tent of meeting.' He said to them: 'What is there [in this language of Shimeon] to tell me that it was a human being at all? I say it was *the Holy One*.'"

11. *Ye men of Galilee*] The Galilæan dialect was a marked peculiarity of the apostolic band. It seems also to have been our Lord's manner of speech. For when Peter is accused (Matt. xxvi. 73) of being one of Christ's followers the words of the accusation are "Surely thou art one of *them*, for thy speech bewrayeth thee."

shall so come] This promise of the return of Jesus, on the immediate expectation of which so many of the first Christians fixed their thoughts, explains those words in the abridged account of the Ascension in St Luke's Gospel (xxiv. 52), "They returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

12. *from the mount called Olivet*] Elsewhere usually called the mount of Olives, but in Luke xix. 29, xxi. 37, some texts give, as here, Olivet.

which is from Jerusalem, &c.] Literally, *which is near unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off*. The mount of Olives is on the east of Jerusalem, and must be passed by those who go from Jerusalem to Bethany. Hence St Luke's expression in the Gospel is (xxiv. 50) "He led them out as far as towards (*ἕως πρὸς*) Bethany."

The *sabbath day's journey* was two thousand yards or cubits [*ammoth*], and in the Babylonian Talmud, *Erubin* 51a, there is given an elaborate account of how this precise limit was arrived at, which is such

come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode

an interesting specimen of Rabbinical reasoning, that it seems worth quoting at some length. "We have a Boraitha [i.e. a Mishna not taught officially in R. Jehudah ha-Nasi's lectures and so not embodied in the Mishna proper, but incorporated amongst the Gemara or in other ways] on Exod. xvi. 29, 'Abide ye every man in his place' (*takhtav*), that means the four yards (which is the space allowed for down sitting and uprising), and in the same verse it says 'Let no man go out of his place' (*makom*), this is the two thousand yards.'" The argument intended to be founded on this explanation is, that as Holy Writ, which does not uselessly multiply words, has used here two different words for *place*, this is done because there is a different meaning for each. "But (continues the questioner) how do you learn this?" (viz. that *makom* implies two thousand yards). Rab Chisda says "We have learnt the meaning of *makom* from the use of *makom* elsewhere, and we learn what that [second] *makom* means from *nisah* (=flight, with which word, in one passage, it is connected), and what *nisah* means we have learnt from another *nisah*, and the meaning of the [second] *nisah* we gather from *gebul* (=border, which is found in connection with it in a certain passage), and what *gebul* means we gather from another *gebul*, and what that *gebul* means from *khuts* (=extremity), and what *khuts* means from another *khuts*; for it is written (Numbers xxxv. 5) 'and ye shall measure from the extremity (*mikhuts*) of the city, on the east side, two thousand yards.'"

So taking *khuts* in this last passage as defined, they, by an equation *khuts*=*gebul*=*nisah*=*makom*, defined the second word *place* mentioned in Exod. xvi. 29, as also equal to two thousand yards.

The Scriptural passages on which the above reasoning is based are (1) Exod. xxi. 13, "I will appoint thee a *place* (*makom*) whither he shall flee" (*yanus*), and from the verb *yanus* the noun *nisah* is formed; (2) Numb. xxxv. 26, "But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border (*gebul*) of the city of his refuge whither he is fled," which passage connects *gebul* and *nisah*; and (3) Numb. xxxv. 27, "If the avenger of blood find him without (*mikhuts*) the border of the city of his refuge," which brings *khuts* into connection with *gebul*.

A traditional development of an interpretation like this must have been received, by him who announces it, from his teacher and must not be his own invention, and in this way a very high antiquity is assured for all such interpretations.

13. *And when they were come in* [i.e. into the city, from the open country where the Ascension had taken place.

they went up into an [the] upper room] Probably the upper room which has been mentioned before (Mark xiv. 15; Luke xxii. 12) as used by our Lord and His disciples for the passover feast. The Greek word in the Gospels is not the same as here, but in both cases it is evident that it was some room which could be spared by the occupiers and which was let or lent to the Galilæan band and their followers. The next words indicate the temporary occupancy, and would be better rendered *where they were abiding, namely Peter, &c.* The eleven were the tenants of

both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother of James*.

the upper room, to which the other disciples resorted for conference and communion.

Peter, &c.] The names of the Apostles are again given, though they had been recorded for Theophilus in "the former treatise" (Luke vi. 14—16), perhaps because it seemed fitting that the names of those who are now to be the leaders of the new teaching should be recited at the outset, that each one may be known to have taken his share in the labour, though it will not fall within the plan of the writer to give a notice of their several works; and secondly, as all the twelve had fled before the Crucifixion, this enumeration of them as again at their post, may shew that there had been in all of them, except Judas, only weakness of the flesh, and not unwillingness of the spirit.

It may be noticed that, whereas in the list of Apostles given in St Luke's Gospel the name of Andrew stands second in the first group of four and next after Peter, in this repeated list Andrew is placed fourth. The history gives no reason for this change, but we see in the Gospels, when important events occurred in Christ's ministry, such as the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the Transfiguration, and the Agony in Gethsemane, that the three disciples chosen to be present with Jesus are Peter, James and John, but not Andrew. Whatever may have been the reason for such an omission, the fact may in some degree explain the altered position of Andrew's name in the list of the twelve. It appears no more in Holy Writ.

The order of the next group of four differs from their arrangement in the Gospel, but as none of them are mentioned after this verse there is nothing to explain the variation in order. In the next group the A. V. is inconsistent in rendering James *the son of Alphaeus*, and afterwards a like construction by Judas *the brother of James*. It is more common to find this dependent genitive in descriptions of a son, though the relationship of brother to brother is found so indicated. Judas is called *the brother of James* here because it is assumed that he is the same person as the author of the Epistle of St Jude, who (Jude 1) calls himself brother of James. But as it is not certain that the writer of that Epistle was one of the twelve, it is better to render the two identical constructions standing so close together in the same way, and so to read *Judas the son of James*. James in that case would be the name of some otherwise unknown person, but it was a very common name among the Jews.

Simon Zelotes] called Simon the *Canaanite* (Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 18). The last-named title is a corruption of an Aramaic word of like meaning with the Greek *Zelotes*, and signifying Zealot, a name applied in our Lord's time to those Jews who were most strict in their observance of the Mosaic ritual. Of this Simon we have no further mention in Scripture history.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15—26. *Election of an Apostle into the place of Judas Iscariot.*

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said (the number of names together were

14. *These all continued, &c.*] Prayer was the fittest preparation for the gift which they were expecting. The words rendered *and supplication* are omitted in the best MSS.

with the women] Better, *with certain women*. Literally, *with women*. Probably some of those who during the life of Jesus had ministered to Him of their substance and had been at the cross and at His grave (Luke viii. 3, xxiv. 22; Matt. xxvii. 55). The frequent mention of these and other women in the course of Christ's ministry is a noteworthy feature of the Gospel story, and bespeaks more consideration shewn by Him for women than was usual among His nation or with other great teachers.

Mary the mother of Jesus] who would naturally remain with St John, to whose care she had been confided by Jesus at the Crucifixion (John xix. 27). This is the last mention of the Blessed Virgin, and thus Scripture leaves her on her knees. She is mentioned apart from the other women as having a more deep interest in all that concerned Jesus than the rest had.

and with his brethren] These, called (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3) James, Joseph (or Joses), Simon and Judas, are here clearly distinguished from the Apostles, which shews us that James, the son of Alphæus, and James, the Lord's brother, were different persons.

15—26. ELECTION OF AN APOSTLE INTO THE PLACE OF JUDAS ISCARIOT.

15. *And in those days*] i.e. the days intervening between the Ascension and Pentecost.

Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples] The best MSS. read *brethren* for *disciples*. Here we have a formal assembling of all those who were avowed followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, and the rising of Peter to address them bespeaks the importance which he attached to the duty they were about to perform in electing a successor to Judas.

the number, &c.] Render, *and there was a multitude of persons* (Gr. *names*) *gathered together, about a hundred and twenty*. For this use of *names*=*persons* cp. Rev. iii. 4, "Thou hast a few *names* even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments."

The hundred and twenty here collected is in no way inconsistent with St Paul's statement (1 Cor. xv. 6) that Christ shewed Himself on one occasion, before His Ascension, to more than five hundred brethren at once. Those were gathered from all parts of the land, and we have now mention made only of such as had continued in the Holy City.

- ¹⁶ about an hundred *and* twenty), Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning
¹⁷ Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this
¹⁸ ministry. (Now this *man* purchased a field with the reward

16. *Men and brethren*] The original is meant for one epithet, and would be fully enough rendered by *brethren* alone, here and in other places where it occurs.

this scripture, &c.] "*This*" is omitted by the best authorities. Read *The scripture, &c.* It is to be noticed that Peter can thus speak because he had now been taught to understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45).

must needs have been fulfilled] Christ was to die on the cross, betrayed to death by one in whom He had trusted. David had spoken in the Psalms of his own afflictions from a similar treachery and also of the destruction which he invoked upon those who were guilty of such infidelity. But while David spake of himself and of his own circumstances, the Holy Ghost through him was speaking of the betrayal of the "Son of David," and the words which had been true of David, must have their still more complete fulfilment in the betrayal of the Saviour, by him "who was guide to them that took Jesus" (Matt. xxvi. 47, &c.).

17. *For he was numbered with [among] us, and had obtained part of this ministry*] Literally, **had received the lot of, &c.** Judas fulfils the conditions of the prophecy (Ps. cix. 2—5). His was the mouth of the deceitful, his the lying tongue, his the groundless enmity, his the requital of evil for good, and hatred for goodwill. But though he had been among the number of the twelve and had been selected by Christ to the same service as the rest, that was not his true place.

18. It seems best to treat this verse and the following, which break the connection of St Peter's remarks on David's prophecies, as no part of the Apostle's speech, but an insertion made by St Luke to emphasize by a minute description the ruin which came upon Judas, and of which Peter had only spoken in the words of the Psalmist.

These two verses (18 and 19) are connected in themselves by the copulative conjunction, but the particles which introduce verse 18 (*μὲν οὖν*) express no more than a confirmation of the statement in which they occur, and a transition to some explanatory matter. They are frequently employed in a similar manner by the writer of the Acts (as v. 41, xiii. 4, xvii. 30, xxiii. 22, xxvi. 9). But that which stamps the passage as a parenthesis is the demonstrative pronoun which stands at the head of it. The position of the Greek words would be represented by *This man you are to know* acquired, &c. If it had been a continuous narrative we should have had some connection of the following kind: "He had obtained part of this ministry, and yet he with the reward of his iniquity, &c." without the insertion of any demonstrative, or indeed of any pronoun at all, in the Greek.

Now this man purchased a field] Rather, *acquired*, which probably

of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known¹⁹ unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say,

was the sense intended by the A. V., as it was an old sense of the English word *purchase*. This may be said not only of him who buys, but of him who becomes the occasion of another's buying. The field was bought by the chief priests (Matt. xxvii. 5—8) with the money which Judas returned, but as they could not take that money for the treasury, they were likely to look upon what was purchased with it as still the property of the traitor. St Luke's employment of the unusual word "acquire" in a narrative where he calls the price of the land "the reward of iniquity," and speaks of the immediate death of Judas, makes it clear that he views (and that the people of Jerusalem did the same) the field Akeldama as the field which Judas acquired, though it became, from the circumstances, a public possession for a burial ground.

the reward of iniquity] This expression is only found in N. T. here and 2 Pet. ii. 13, 15. So that it seems to be a Petrine phrase. The A. V. conceals the identity of the Greek words in these three passages by giving them in each place a different English rendering.

and falling headlong, &c.] This can only have occurred after the *hanging* mentioned by St Matthew (xxvii. 5). It appears from St Luke's narrative here that the death of Judas, attended by all these dreadful circumstances, took place in the spot which the chief priests eventually purchased. This, if a fit place for an Eastern burying ground, would be of a rocky character where caves abounded or could easily be made, and it would be the more rugged, if, as St Matthew's narrative intimates, it had been used for the digging of clay for the potters. If in such a place the suicide first hanged himself and the cord which he used gave way, it is easy to understand how in the fall all the consequences described in this verse would be the result. For a similar result to bodies falling on rocks, cp. 2 Chron. xxv. 12. Buxtorf (*Rabb. Lex.* s. v. סכר) suggests that the expression of St Matthew, "hanged himself," might be rendered "he was choked," as if by asphyxia, from over-excitement and anguish. He says the Jews have so explained the end of Ahithophel, and that a like explanation might suit in the Gospel. And St Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxii. *ad Antiochenos*, uses the expression *to be strangled by conscience*. But this view seems to be surrounded by far more difficulties than the belief that St Matthew merely mentioned one single incident in the suicide's fate, while St Luke, because his purpose seemed to ask it, has described the death of Judas in such wise as to shew that his destruction was as terrible as anything of which David had spoken in the Psalms to which St Peter had referred.

19. *And it was known*] Rather, **became known**. The fate of Judas, if he died there, and the way in which the purchase money was obtained, caused the name to be changed from "the Potter's Field" to "the Field of Blood," all people recognizing the fitness of the new name.

is called] The use of expressions like this in the present tense shews

²³ The field of blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another

that we are dealing with documents written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

in their proper tongue] i.e. in the language spoken by the Jews in Jerusalem, which was Aramaic. The addition of these words and the explanation of the name *Akeldama* point to this passage as an insertion made by St Luke for the information of Theophilus, who, as his name indicates, was probably of Greek origin, and, it may be, unacquainted with the vernacular speech of Palestine. There could have been no need for St Peter to make such an explanation to the one hundred and twenty who listened to his address. Nor, indeed, is it probable that the name "Field of Blood" became of such common use within the time between the Crucifixion and the election of Matthias, as to make it possible for St Peter to have used the words.

For a similar insertion of a significant name introduced into a compiled narrative before the time at which the name was actually given, cp. 1 Sam. iv. 1, where Eben-ezer is spoken of, though the circumstances in which the name originated are not mentioned till 1 Sam. vii. 12.

20. The passages quoted by St Peter are from Ps. lxxix. 25, where it is written "Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents;" and Ps. cix. 8, "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." St Peter changes the plural of the former verse into the singular in his quotation, for David was speaking of many enemies of his own, yet though Judas was the instrument through which the many enemies of Jesus wrought out their will, it is the punishment which came on the chief offender that St Peter is now desirous to illustrate and point to as a fulfilment of prophecy. The fulfilment in the case of the Jewish nation came at a later date, though their days as a nation were now few, and their destruction, when it came, as terrible as that of Judas.

Let his habitation be] Rather, **become**, or **be made**.

and his bishoprick] Now that this word has so restricted a meaning in English it is better to use the more general term **office** which is given in the margin. In v. 25 *this ministry* is used of the same charge, and might be rendered *this diaconate*. A comma placed after the second *and* in this verse will make it clear that there are two quotations from different places. There is no contradiction between the two passages quoted by St Peter, for though the habitation of Judas is to become desolate, and have none dwelling therein, the office which he had been chosen to fill is still to be occupied, and the purpose of God in the choice of the twelve is not to be left incomplete through the offence of the traitor. And it is on the necessity for filling his place that St Peter immediately dwells, saying, For this reason must a new member be chosen. In one passage of the Psalmist the Spirit speaks of the vacancy in the Apostolic office through Iscariot's transgression, in the other of the necessity for filling it up.

take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with²¹ us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto *that same day*²² that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained *to be* a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed²³ two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and

21. As the new Apostle is to be, like the rest, an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, he must have been a disciple from the beginning of Christ's ministry. Such a necessity would probably make the number from whom choice could be made a very small one. It seems hardly probable, if St Luke's design had been (as is so often asserted) to represent St Paul as in every way like St Peter, that he would have dwelt so strongly on this personal knowledge of Jesus during his ministerial life, as a necessary qualification for the Apostolate.

the Lord Jesus went in and out] This expression, though used in the O. T. to describe some position of leadership in war or otherwise (cp. Deut. xxxi. 2; 1 Sam. xviii. 13), yet is apparently used here only = led his life. So we have it again Acts ix. 28. Cp. also John x. 9.

22. *to be a witness with us of his resurrection*] The Resurrection was the central truth, but to bear testimony that it was truly Jesus who had risen, the witness must have known Him well before His crucifixion.

It is quite in accordance with the character of St Luke's narrative that although he is careful to relate how the number of the Apostles was made complete, and the Church thus furnished with that same number of leaders which Jesus had chosen from the first, yet when Matthias has been chosen, he tells us no word about his special actions. These were no doubt of the same character as those of the eleven, but the writer's purpose is only to give typical instances of the Apostolic labours, and to shew how the Gospel was spread abroad exactly as Christ had foretold.

23. *they appointed two*] Thus exercising their own judgment to a certain degree in the appointment, as they could rightly do from their three years intimacy with those who had been disciples from the beginning.

Joseph called Barsabas [Barsabbas in the best MSS.] *who was surnamed Justus*] From the identity of the names Joseph and Joses (see note on v. 14) it has been thought that this Joseph is identical with Joses surnamed Barnabas, mentioned iv. 36. But Barsabbas is apparently a patronymic like Bartimæus, while Barnabas is interpreted as a significant appellation in iv. 36 (see note there), so that there is no sufficient ground for the identification. The name *Justus*, being of Latin origin, was probably used by Joseph in his intercourse with the Gentile inhabitants of the country. Thus Saul takes a Latin name, Paulus, at the commencement of his missionary labours. So Simon had a Greek name, Peter (and may not Christ have given it to him as the name by which he should be known over all the world?), and Thomas was called Didymus. To judge from the mention of Joseph's three names, and from his standing

24 Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two
 25 thou hast chosen, that *he* may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that *he*
 26 might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots ;

first in order in the mention of the chosen pair, he was of more account among the Apostles than Matthias. Of his previous or future history we know nothing.

and Matthias] He is said by Eusebius (*H. E.* i. 12. 1) and Epiphanius (i. 20) to have been one of the Seventy, and there was an apocryphal Gospel which passed by his name (Euseb. iii. 23).

24. *And they prayed, and said]* Here we are not to conclude that St Luke has recorded any more than the purport of the prayer of the disciples, in the same way as in the speeches which he reports he has only preserved a brief abstract of the speakers' arguments and language.

Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men] By the lot the final decision was left in the hands of God (cf. Prov. xvi. 33), who alone could know which of these two, both having the needful qualifications as far as man could see, would prove the more excellent Apostle. The same expression is applied to God, Acts xv. 8.

shew whether of these two] Literally, *shew of these two the one whom thou hast chosen.*

25. *that he may take part]* The best MSS. read *that he may take the place*, &c. The *Rec. Text* has the same words here and in v. 17, as is represented in the A. V. A scribe remembering the former would easily assimilate the two places, and as the Greek word in v. 17 signifies *lot*, he might perceive a fitness in its use in this part of the narrative.

from which Judas by transgression fell] Better, *from which Judas fell away.* The Gk. has only a verb which literally = *transgressed*.

that he might go to his own place] He had been chosen into one place by Jesus, but had made another choice for himself, which had ended in destruction. That "his own place" when thus used was, to the Jewish mind, an equivalent for Gehenna = the place of torment, may be seen from the *Baal Haturim* on Numb. xxiv. 25, where it is said "Balaam went to *his own place*, i.e. to Gehenna." A like expression is found concerning Job's friends, *Midrash Rabbah* on Eccl. vii. 1.

26. *And they gave forth their lots]* Better, *And they gave lots for them*, in accordance with MSS. The process probably was that each member of the company wrote on a tablet or ticket the name of one of the chosen two; the whole were then placed in some vessel and shaken together, and that tablet which was first drawn out decided the election. The casting of lots, though not now permitted to the Jews (see Shulkhan Aruch *Foreh Deah* par. 179. 1), was used by a provision of the Mosaic Law (Lev. xvi. 8) for the selection of one out of the two goats for the Lord. "The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell" was offered for a sin offering. The Apostles had not yet received the Spirit which was to "guide them into all truth." When the Holy Ghost had been given, they, as St Chrysostom notices (*In Act. Ap. Hom.* iii.), used no more casting of lots.

and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

I—13. *The Holy Ghost given at Pentecost. Effect first produced thereby on the dwellers at Jerusalem.*

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were ² all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came ² a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there ³ appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it

II. 1—13. THE HOLY GHOST GIVEN AT PENTECOST. EFFECT FIRST PRODUCED THEREBY ON THE DWELLERS AT JERUSALEM.

1. *the day of Pentecost]* The second of the three great Jewish feasts, the Passover being the first, and the third, the feast of Tabernacles. *Pentecost* is the Greek name of the feast, derived from *Pentecostos* = fiftieth; because it was kept on the fiftieth day after the Passover-Sabbath. In the Law it is called “the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours” (Exod. xxiii. 16), and also, from being seven weeks after the Passover, it is named “the feast of weeks” (Exod. xxxiv. 22; Deut. xvi. 9—10). The offering in this festival was the two first loaves made from the first portion of the wheat-harvest of the year, as a thank-offering.

This day was perhaps chosen for the outpouring of the Spirit upon ⁷ the Apostles, that there might be a greater multitude present in Jerusalem, and so the tidings of this gift might at once be spread abroad. It is perhaps for this reason that the very word employed is one which indicates that the day was *fully* come, and so all that were intending to be present at the feast were there. We find in ix. 2 that there were Christians at Damascus before we read of any one of the Apostolic band visiting that city. It may well be that among those who saw the gifts now bestowed, and whose hearts were pierced by Peter’s sermon, there were some who went forth to this and other cities, bearing the fame and teaching of the new society along with them. In like manner, we cannot doubt that it was in order that more might hear His words, that our Lord so frequently went to Jerusalem at the feasts. (John iv. 45, v. 1, vii. 10, x. 22, &c.)

they were all with one accord in one place] The best MSS. have *they were all together in one place*. Doubtless in the upper room where the Apostles abode, and where the disciples had met for the election of Matthias.

2. *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind]* Rather, **of the rushing of a mighty wind**, lit., *of a mighty wind borne along*. The verb employed to express the rushing of the wind is used by St Peter (2 Ep. i. 17, 18) of “the voice which came from heaven” at the Transfiguration, also (i. 21) of the gift of prophecy, and the motion of the prophets by the Holy Ghost.

3. *cloven tongues like as of fire]* Better, **tongues like as of fire parting**

4 sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the
5 Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under
6 heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude

asunder; cf. Is. v. 24, where the Hebrew has "tongue of fire" while the A. V. gives only "fire." It is also to be noticed that the appearance is not called fire, but only compared unto fire. The idea conveyed by the verb is that the flamelike tongues were distributing themselves throughout the assembly, and the result is expressed by what follows; *and it sat upon each of them.* The intention of the writer is to describe something far more persistent than meteoric light or flashes of electricity. The sound which is heard fills the house, and the flames rest for some time on the heads of the disciples. (See v. 33.)

4. This verse describes a great miracle, and its simplicity of statement marks it as the record of one who felt that no additional words could make the matter other than one which passed the human understanding.

they began to speak with other tongues] Spoken of as *new* tongues (Mark xvi. 17). It means languages which they had not known before, and from the history it would appear that some of the company spake in one and some in another language, for the crowd of foreigners, when they come together, all find somebody among the speakers whom they are able to understand.

5. *there were dwelling at Jerusalem, &c.*] Probably, in addition to the visitors, many religious Jews from foreign parts were permanent residents in Jerusalem, for it was to the Jew a thing much to be desired, that he might die and be buried near the Holy City. It is said (T. B. *Kethuboth*, 111 a), "Every one that is buried in the land of Israel is in as good case as if he were buried under the altar," and there are many other like expressions in the immediate context of this quotation. That among the crowd were some residents seems the more likely, because when they recognized the new tongues, some asked as though they were acquainted with the speakers, "Are not these men Galilæans?"

devout men] The adjective is used of the aged Simeon (Luke ii. 25), and of the men who carried Stephen to his burial (Acts viii. 2).

out of every nation under heaven] Hyperbole, as we use *from every part of the world*. So (Josephus, *B. Jud.* 11. 16. 4) Herod Agrippa says, "There is not a nation in the world which does not contain some of us" (Jews). Cp. ver. 10, note on *Libya*.

6. *Now when this was noised abroad*] Rather, **And when this sound was heard.** Φωνή though not the same word as is used for *sound* in verse 2, yet is never found in the sense of a *report* or *rumour*, as is given by the A. V. It is used for *crying aloud*, as in the mourning at Rama and Christ's cry on the cross (Matt. ii. 18), or in John the Baptist's preaching (Mark i. 3), and of voices from heaven frequently (Matt. xvii. 5; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22; Acts ix. 4, &c.), of the sound of the wind

came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they ⁷ were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And ⁸ how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the ⁹

which is used as a figure for the gift of the Spirit in Christ's conversation with Nicodemus (John iii. 8), and constantly of the heavenly voices in the book of the Revelation (i. 10, v. 2, vi. 6, &c.).

The sound which was sent forth, though heard around in the city, was evidently such as could be traced to a central spot, for to the dwelling of the Apostles, led by the sound, the multitude congregated. It would need but a brief space for a crowd to assemble, and all the new comers found among the disciples, now divinely prepared to be Christ's heralds, some who were declaring what had come to pass, and the great things which God had wrought with them, in the different languages of the lands where the strangers had been born. This was clearly not a proclamation of the wonderful works of God in some one language, which the Spirit, acting upon the hearers, caused them to appreciate as if it were their own, for in that way the gift of the Holy Ghost ought to have been described as poured out, not on the speakers but on the listeners.

7. *Galileans*] No doubt the twelve came more prominently forward than the rest, and in Jerusalem they had been known as Galileans before the Crucifixion (Matt. xxvi. 69—73).

8. *every man in our own tongue*] i.e. language. There is no description here of any jargon or incoherent speech, we are told of utterances tested by the ears of those who had spoken these languages from their youth. The only question on which from St Luke's description we are left in uncertainty is this: whether the disciples did or did not understand the new words which they were enabled to utter. The only other place in the New Testament which throws any light on this matter is St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. For a consideration of the expressions which St Paul there employs concerning these marvellous gifts, see note after v. 13.

9, 10. Under all the nationalities mentioned in this and the following verse we are to understand the Jews, either by birth or conversion (as is indicated in the case of Rome), whose homes were in the countries named. ✓ *Parthians*] A people who occupied a wide extent of country south of the Caspian Sea, from which they were separated by Hyrcania. They stretched in the Apostolic times from India to the Tigris, and no doubt stand foremost in this list because of their great fame among the nations of the time.

✓ *Medes*] Their country lay east of Assyria, north-west of Persia and south and south-west of the Caspian Sea.

✓ *Elamites*] These dwelt in the district known to the Greeks and Romans as Susiana. It lay at the north of the Persian Gulf and was

10 dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome,

bounded on the west by the Tigris, touching Media on the north and Persia on the south and east. They were a Semitic people, perhaps taking their name from Elam, son of Shem (Gen. x. 22). "Shushan in the province of Elam" is mentioned Dan. viii. 2.

Mesopotamia] The country between the Euphrates and the Tigris.

Judea] These would comprise the Jews from the neighbouring towns.

Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia] These were all countries within Asia Minor, Pontus lying in the N.E. and forming, on the north, part of the shore of the Euxine. Cappadocia was south of Pontus, Phrygia was westward of Cappadocia, separated from it by Lycaonia, while Pamphylia stretched on the south coast of Asia Minor between Lycia on the W. and Cilicia on the E. By Asia in this verse, and everywhere else in the Acts, is meant the Roman province known as Proconsular Asia. It comprised all the western coast of Asia Minor and may be roughly considered as embracing the countries known as Mysia, Lydia and Caria. Its capital was Ephesus, and in this district were the seven churches of the Apocalypse.

Egypt] The cities of the north of Egypt, and especially Alexandria, were the abodes of great numbers of Jews.

Libya] was the name anciently applied to the African continent. The parts of it about Cyrene means the district called Cyrenaica. This lay E. of the Syrtis Major and contained five chief cities of which Cyrene was the best known. We find Simon a Cyrenian living in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion (Matt. xxvii. 32). Josephus has a passage (*Antiq.* xiv. 7. 2) which testifies to the wide dispersion of the Jews at this time, and also mentions specially Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene as full of them.

"Strabo in another place bears witness to this [the wealth and influence of the Jews]; saying that when Sulla crossed over into Greece to war against Mithridates, he also sent Lucullus to put down in *Cyrene* the revolution raised there by *our nation, of whom the whole world is full*. His words are: There were four classes in the city of the Cyrenians, that of citizens, that of husbandmen, that of resident aliens, and *the fourth of the Jews*. *Now this last class has already spread into every city, and it is not easy to find a place in the world which has not admitted this tribe, and which is not swayed by them*. And with regard to Egypt and Cyrene as being under the same governors and many portions of other countries, it has come to pass that they imitate them [the Jews], and also give special support to companies of the Jews, and flourish from their adoption of the ancestral laws of the Jews. For instance in Egypt there is a special district set apart for the Jews, and beside this *a large part of the city of Alexandria is apportioned to this race*. And a special magistrate is appointed for them, who governs their nation and administers judgment, and takes charge of their

Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them ¹¹ speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And ¹² they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, *These* ¹³ *men* are full of new wine.

contracts¹ and agreements, as if he were the governor of an independent state."

strangers of Rome] Better, *sojourners from Rome both Jews &c.* We know from the allusions to them in Latin writers that Jews were numerous in Rome (Hor. *Sat.* i. 5; Juv. x. 14, &c.). It is most probable that converts from among these Romans founded the Church which we know from Acts xxviii. 14, 15 was flourishing there when St Paul first came to that city.

proselytes] Gk. *προσῆλυτος*—*one who has come over*; here, and generally, of converts from heathenism to the religion of the Jews.

11. *Cretes*] Dwellers in the well-known island which lies south of the Cyclades in the Mediterranean, now called *Candia*. Christianity may perhaps have been spread in Crete also from the converts at Pentecost. Titus was made bishop of Crete.

Arabians] Inhabitants of the great peninsula which stretches between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

the wonderful works] More literally, *the great works* of God. So (x. 46) of the first Gentile converts on whom the Holy Ghost came it is said, "They heard them speak with tongues and *magnify God*." And of those to whom the Spirit was given at Ephesus (xix. 6), "They spake with tongues and *prophesied*."

12. *they were all amazed, and were in doubt*] Rather, **and were perplexed**. The original means they did not know what to make of what they saw and heard. They had no doubt of the facts, for their ears bore testimony that in their own various mother-tongues the great works of God were being published, and they had just said so.

13. *Others mocking, &c.*] Better, **But others mocking said; They are full of new wine**. There is no Greek for the words *these men*, as is shewn by the italics of the A. V.

The sight presented to the bystanders on this occasion was certainly unusual. We cannot but believe that the disciples would be in a fervour of excitement and enthusiasm, and the people who composed the several groups were likely to be no less moved by the account to which they listened in their various languages, coming from the lips of men whom some in the throng recognized for Galilæans, and whose garb and manner would be like that of the ordinary natives of Jerusalem. The excitement exhibited on both sides will account for the remark of the mockers.

¹ This is specially interesting as it corresponds with what was done in our own country. The Jewish contract is called *Shetar*, and such contracts were taken care of by the English authorities in old times, and from their name is derived what we now write *Star-chamber*.

new wine] Lit. *sweet wine*, defined as made of the drippings from the clusters before the grapes were trodden.

In the above description of the events of the day of Pentecost, the meaning which St Luke intends to convey is very plain in every respect, except that we cannot with certainty gather from it whether the disciples, as well as speaking new languages, also understood what they uttered. It would seem most reasonable to conclude that the Holy Spirit with the one power also bestowed the other, and this may have been so in the case of the disciples at Pentecost, even though it was not so at other times and under other circumstances. The only Scripture which bears upon the question is St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians (xii. 10—xiv. 30). There among the gifts of the Spirit the Apostle enumerates "*divers kinds of tongues*" (xii. 10, 31), and as what might be a separate gift not included in the first, "*the interpretation of tongues*," (xii. 10). He mentions in the next chapter the *tongues of angels* as well as of men (xiii. 1), but not in such an enumeration as to connect the words with our enquiry. It should be borne in mind that all which the Apostle says in the Epistle is addressed to the Corinthians, not as missionary labourers but as members of a settled Christian Church, and he is instructing them what the best gifts are after which they should seek. Now their labours and utterances were to be among their own people and mostly among those already professing Christianity. St Paul repeatedly dwells on "the church" as the scene of their labours, which expression without necessarily always implying an edifice (which however here seems to be its meaning, see xiv. 23, 27) indicates a Christian community. The Apostle tells them that gifts of tongues are not for these. Tongues are for a sign not to them that believe but to the unbelieving. To speak with tongues was therefore not the best gift to be desired for the Church at Corinth. Yet we can fancy that some members longed for such a power, and it is to such as these that the Apostle's remarks are directed. In such a congregation as theirs, he tells them, "he that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God" (xiv. 2), meaning to teach them that if a man had this gift he would yet profit his neighbours nothing, for they would not be men of a foreign speech like the crowd at Pentecost, or like those in foreign lands which the Christian missionaries must visit. Next he adds "he that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself" (xiv. 4), for he feels the power and tells of the great works of God. The Apostle could wish "they all spake with tongues," if, that is, there were an advantage to the Church therein, but under their circumstances he rather wishes the gift of prophecy, i.e. power of exposition of the Scriptures and preaching, for them. We next come to those sentences which bear directly upon our enquiry (xiv. 13), "Let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret." There were then in the Corinthian Church examples of that division of these closely connected gifts which in the enumeration of spiritual gifts the Apostle seems to imply, some spake with tongues who could not interpret, and others could interpret who did not speak with tongues. And the next words confirm this view, "If I pray in a tongue my spirit prayeth," (and in this way I edify myself,) "but my understanding is unfruitful." Therefore the Apostle desires that form of

14--21. *St Peter's Sermon. Refutation of the Mockers.*

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice, ¹⁴ and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell

power for himself which in a congregation shall exercise both spirit and understanding. He himself had this gift in great fulness, but in the Church it is not that which he would desire to use, lest the unlearned should not be able to say Amen to his giving of thanks. For in the ordinary church-assembly if the gift of tongues were exercised, it would seem madness to those Corinthian unbelievers who came in, when they heard a speaker uttering a foreign language to a congregation who were all Greeks, and their minister a Greek likewise. St Paul therefore ordains that if any man speak in a tongue in the Church, he must have an interpreter or else must keep silence. From which ordinance also it appears that there were those who, though endowed with the gift of speaking with tongues, were yet not able to interpret to the congregation the words which they were empowered to speak.

In these passages we have all the references to this gift of the Holy Ghost which seem to help us to appreciate in some degree what its character was. Whatever may have been the case at Pentecost, certainly in the Corinthian Church the power of speaking seems not always to have had with it the power of interpretation, though in some cases it had, and all were to pray for the one to be given with the other. Yet in this whole account it is to be borne in mind that we have no indication that such gifts were frequent in Corinth, but only that the members of the Church longed to possess them. From this wish the Apostle dissuades them, because their duty was to minister to believers rather than to unbelievers, whereas on those occasions where the gift was most markedly bestowed, as related by the author of the Acts, viz. at the house of Cornelius, and in the heathen and multilingual maritime city of Ephesus, as well as at the outpouring on Pentecost, there was the probability of having an audience on whom such a display of God's gifts would be likely to produce the same kind of effect which had been produced in Jerusalem on the first manifestation.

14--21. ST PETER'S SERMON. REFUTATION OF THE MOCKERS.

14. *But Peter, standing up, &c.*] The twelve naturally take the leading place among the disciples, and Peter, who had been spokesman before, begins the general address now, directing it principally to those who were dwellers in Jerusalem and the neighbouring country, for it was more likely to be these who gave vent to the mocking speeches than the foreigners who would better recognize the astounding nature of what had come to pass.

and said unto them] Better, *and spake forth unto them*. The original word is the same as that used to describe the gift which they had just received. "They spake as the Spirit gave them *utterance*," lit. to speak forth (ii. 4). St Paul employs it when Festus had said he was mad. "I *spake forth* the words of truth and soberness" (xxvi. 25).

at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my
 15 words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing
 16 it is *but* the third hour of the day. But this is that which
 17 was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to
 pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of
 my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your
 daughters shall prophesy, and your young men
 shall see visions, and your old men shall dream
 18 dreams: and on my servants and on my hand-

and hearken] The word is only found here in the N.T. It signifies to take anything into the ears.

15. *are not drunken]* Wine was drunk by the Jews with flesh only, and, founding the custom on Exodus xvi. 8, they ate bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening, and so took no wine till late in the day. So Eccles. x. 16, 17, by the “princes who eat *in the morning*” are meant those who eat to the full of all sorts of food and so take wine, and their opposites are next described as those who eat in due season for strength and not for *drunkenness*.

The paraphrase of this passage given in the Targum is worth notice in illustration of the text of the Acts. It reads, “Woe to thee, O land of Israel, when there shall reign over thee Jeroboam the wicked, and shall exterminate from the midst of thee the offering of the morning sacrifice, and when thy lords shall eat bread before any man has offered the perpetual offering of the morning. Blessed art thou, land of Israel, at the time when Hezekiah the son of Ahaz (who is of the genealogy of the house of David) shall reign, who will be a mighty hero in the law, and fulfil all the duties of the commandments, and then thy princes shall only eat bread after the perpetual offering has been offered (i.e. their eating shall be) at the fourth hour, from the labour of their hands in the strength of the law, and not in faintness and blindness of the eyes.”

third hour of the day] Only one quarter of the day was yet over. The Jews divided the day and night each into twelve parts, which they called hours but which varied in length as the daylight was less or more. When the day was as long as the night the third hour would be nine o'clock in the morning.

16. *by (or through) the prophet Joel]* Joel calls his prophecy “the word of the Lord that came unto Joel.” The passage is from Joel ii. 28—32. The order of the clauses differs slightly from the Hebrew order, shewn in the A.V., but agrees generally with the LXX.

17. *in the last days]* These words are an interpretation of the *afterwards* of the Hebrew, and *after these things* of the LXX. The expression “the last days” is used in the Old Testament to signify the coming of the Messiah. (Cp. Isa. ii. 2; Micah iv. 1.) The latter clauses of this verse are transposed in Joel.

18. *and on my servants, &c.]* The conjunctions of the original demand a stronger rendering. *Yea and, &c.*

maidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders¹⁹ in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the²⁰ sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before *that* great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, *that*²¹ whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

22—36. *Recital of God's witness by the Resurrection to the Messiahship of Jesus.*

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles

and they shall prophesy] See xix. 6, where this is the result of the gift of the Spirit; cf. also Agabus (xi. 28), and the daughters of Philip the Evangelist (xxi. 9).

19. *and I will shew wonders, &c.*] By the figurative language of this verse the prophet teaches that even when the kingdom of Christ shall have come into the world, mighty troubles shall still prevail. Cp. Christ's own words of like import (Matt. xxiv. 21—30).

20. *that great and notable day*] Instead of *notable* we have in Joel *terrible*. The words of the N. T. are those of the LXX. The Hebrew verbs *to fear* and *to see* have often been confounded in that version. On the various senses of this expression cp. Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.* Mark ix. 1. The prophecy of Joel was primarily and partially fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, but also looked onward to its destruction by the Romans.

21. *shall be saved*] Eusebius (*H. E.* III. 5. 3) tells how the Christians were warned to leave Jerusalem before the destruction, and went into a city of Perea called Pella.

22—36. RECITAL OF GOD'S WITNESS BY THE RESURRECTION
TO THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS.

22. *men of Israel*] As the prophecies which St Peter is about to put forward were given before the nation was rent into two parts, he calls them by a name which points to their union and common descent from Jacob.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man, &c.] He begins with the manhood of Jesus as that which they would all confess.

approved] i.e. publicly demonstrated or set forth. Cp. the words of Nicodemus (John iii. 2), "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

among you] Better, *unto you*; for the testimony had been given not only *among* them, but presented *unto* them, cf. John xii. 37,

and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the
 23 midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being
 delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge
 of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified
 24 and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the
 pains of death: because it was not possible that he should
 25 be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I
 foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is
 on my right hand, that I should not be moved:
 26 therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was
 glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:
 27 because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nei-

“Though he had done so many miracles *before them* yet they believed not on him.”

by miracles and wonders and signs] These distinct names are given to Christ's marvellous works according to the light in which they are viewed. The first name, *miracles*, lit. **powers**, is applied to them because they proclaimed the might of Him who wrought them; they are named *wonders*, because they called forth that feeling when they were wrought; and *signs* because they point out their author as Divine.

God did] St Peter does not yet advance to the declaration of Christ as God, only as God's agent, in works which their own eyes had seen.

23. *him, being delivered, &c.*] i.e. given up unto you, as God had decreed for the sake of man's redemption.

ye have taken, and by wicked hands, &c.] The best MSS. omit the word rendered *have taken*. Read, *ye by the hand of wicked men have crucified and slain*. *By the hand of* is a Hebrew formula for *by means of*. Cp. Lev. viii. 36, “things which the Lord commanded *by the hand of Moses*.” So 2 Kings xiv. 25, &c.

wicked] Lit. *lawless*.

25. *For David speaketh concerning him*] The passage which St Peter quotes is from Ps. xvi. 8—11, and he argues that it could not be of himself that the Psalmist there spake, for they had evidence that the words could not be truly said of him; but that having regard to God's promise he spake of Him who was to be born from his line, as identified with himself. St Peter's quotation is from the LXX.

I foresaw] The Hebrew has, *I set*. *Foresaw* is here used as = *saw*.

26. *my tongue was glad*] The Heb. has *my glory*. Cp. Ps. cviii. 1, where the A. V. has, according to the Hebrew, “I will give praise even *with my glory*,” while the Prayer-book Version renders “*with the best member that I have*.”

shall rest] Lit. *shall tabernacle*.

27. *in hell*] The Greek word here and in v. 31 is *Hades*, and signifies *the unseen world*.

ther wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways²⁸ of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men *and* brethren, let *me* freely speak unto²⁹ you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being³⁰ a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, *he* would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing³¹ *this* before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

neither wilt thou suffer] Lit. *give*.

thine Holy One] The Hebrew word in the Psalm contains the idea of *beloved*, as well as *godly* or *holy*. Our A. V. represents the Greek.

28. *thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance*] Thus the LXX. paraphrases the Hebrew, which gives "in thy presence is fulness of joy."

29. Here the Apostle begins his argument from the words of David, and at the outset speaks to his hearers as *brethren*.

Men and brethren] See on i. 16.

let me freely speak] Better (with the margin), **I may freely say** unto you of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, i. e. none of you will contradict such a statement. As St Paul using the same argument (xiii. 36), "David after he had served his own generation fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers."

and his sepulchre is with us] thus shewing that after death he did not rise again. The sepulchre of the House of David was a famous object in the Holy City. Among the marvels of Jerusalem mentioned in the *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan* (c. 35), we are told, "There are no graves made in Jerusalem except the tombs of the house of David and of Huldah the Prophetess, which have been there from the days of the first prophets."

On the burial of David in Zion, cp. 1 Kings ii. 10 with 2 Sam. v. 7.

30. *knowing that God had sworn with an oath*] See Ps. cxxiii. 11, "of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."

that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne] The words represented by "according Christ" are omitted in the best MSS. The clause as corrected by them would be "of the fruit of his loins *one* should sit [or he would set *one*] on his throne."

31. *spake of the resurrection of Christ*] Better, of the resurrection of the Christ, i. e. the Messiah, the anointed of Jehovah.

that his soul was not left in hell, &c.] The words for *his soul* are not found in the best MSS. Read, **that neither was he left in hell nor did his flesh, &c.** This is an example of a kind of variation from the earliest MSS. which is very common and can be most easily understood

- 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.
 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.
 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on
 35 my right hand, until I make thy foes thy foot-

and explained. On the margin of some early copy the words for *his soul* were written as an explanation of the shorter expression used in this verse by the more full language of the Psalm in ver. 27, and by some later scribe the words were brought into the text.

32. *This Jesus hath God raised up*] (i.e. from the dead). The verb here, and the noun translated *resurrection* in the previous verse, are parts of the same word, and make the statement very forcible in the Greek. David spake of a *resurrection*, which manifestly was not his own, but here is now come to pass the *resurrection* of Jesus, of which we all are witnesses. The *all* is probably to be confined to Peter and the eleven, with whom he is more closely connected in this speech (see v. 14) than with the rest.

33. *Therefore being by [or at] the right hand of God exalted*] i.e. into heaven. For not only are the Apostles and disciples witnesses of the Resurrection but also of the Ascension.

the promise of the Holy Ghost] called *the promise of the Father* in i. 4. Christ had told His disciples that the Father would send this gift upon them in answer to His prayer. "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter.....he shall teach you all things" (John xiv. 16, 26).

he hath shed forth] Better, *he hath poured forth*. Thus the fulfilment of the prophecy is, as in the original, described by the same word which is put into the mouth of the prophet in v. 17.

see and hear] It would seem from this that the appearance, like as of fire, which rested upon each of them, remained visible for some time, thus making it apparent how different this was from any meteoric flashes into which some have endeavoured to explain away the miracle which St Luke describes.

34. *For David is not ascended*] Better *ascended not*. He went down to the grave, and "slept with his fathers."

but he saith himself] in Ps. cx. 1. Speaking as a prophet, and of the same person, whom, though he was to be born of the fruit of his loins, he yet in the Spirit called his Lord. The words of this Psalm the Jews in the discourse with our Lord (Matt. xxii. 44, 45) admit to be spoken of the Christ.

The LORD [Jehovah] said unto [him whom I must even now call] my Lord] as by prophetic insight I foresee how great he shall be.

Sit thou on my right hand] i.e. be thou a sharer of my throne and power. This is a common Eastern expression. Cp. the request of the mother of James and John when she desired places of influence for her

stool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, ³⁶ that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37—40. *Effect of St Peter's Sermon.*

Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in *their* ³⁷ heart, and said unto Peter and *to* the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said ³⁸ unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you

sons in what she supposed would be a temporal kingdom (Matt. xx. 21).

35. *until I make thy foes thy footstool*] To put the foot on the neck of an enemy is an expression for complete victory. This was an Oriental custom (cp. Josh. x. 24). Christ's enemies are to become His footstool, but His power shall not end then. When they are all subdued His kingdom shall continue and be more glorious.

36. *let all the house of Israel know*] Of course such an appeal can only be made to Israel, for they only had known the prophecies, and received the promises.

that God hath made, &c.] The Greek has more force than the A. V. gives. Render, **God hath made him both Lord and Christ, even this Jesus whom ye crucified.** This is the close of the reasoning. Jesus, who had been crucified, God has raised from the grave, God has exalted to heaven and set Him on His own right hand, and thus shewn that He is the Lord and the Anointed One.

37—40. EFFECT OF ST PETER'S SERMON.

37. *pricked in their heart*] stung with remorse at the enormity of the wickedness which had been committed in the Crucifixion, and at the blindness with which the whole nation had closed their eyes to the teaching of the prophecies which had spoken of the Messiah.

unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles] As specially the witnesses of the Resurrection and Ascension, and being the recognized heads of the new society.

Men and brethren] See i. 16, note.

what shall we do?] To escape the penalties which must fall on the nation that has so sinned against light and knowledge; who have had the true Light in their midst, but have comprehended it not, and have crucified the Lord of glory.

38. *Repent*] This was in accordance with the directions of Jesus before His ascension (Luke xxiv. 47), "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name."

be baptized] Also enjoined by Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19), and while there the baptism is "to be in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and here it is only said "in the name of Jesus Christ," we are not to suppose any change made from the first ordinance, but only that as the Church was to be called Christ's, so in

in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and
 39 ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are
 40 afar off, *even as* many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41—47. *The first Converts and their behaviour.*

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized :

mentioning the Sacrament for the admission of its members His name was specially made prominent. It was belief in Christ as the Son of God which constituted the ground of admission to the privileges of His Church. This made the whole of St Peter's creed (Matt. xvi. 16) when Christ pronounced him blessed.

ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost] This is expressly stated to have been given to some of the converts (see viii. 17, x. 47, &c.), and we cannot doubt that it was largely bestowed on these earlier penitents.

39. *the promise is unto you, and to your children*] Just as "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made" (Gal. iii. 16), so is it to be under the new covenant.

all that are afar off] Peter knew from the first, we see, that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the same privileges as Israel. But Christ's commission said they were to preach *first* in Jerusalem and in Judæa. Peter needed the vision of the great sheet let down from heaven to tell him *when* God's time was come for the extension of the work; and though in his dream the natural prejudice of his race was asserted, yet when he awoke he went "without gainsaying as soon as he was sent for" (x. 29), as he says to Cornelius. For Christ's words had been "Go, teach *all nations*."

shall call] Better; *shall call unto him*. The verb is a compound, not the simple verb.

40. *And with many other words did he testify, &c.*] Hence we learn that there is no attempt made by the writer of the Acts to produce more than the substance and character of what was here said. And we may be sure that he uses the same rule always, and we need not therefore be startled if we find an address followed by mighty results, even though St Luke's abstract of it may only extend over a few verses.

testify] The same word is translated *charge* in 1 Tim. v. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 14, iv. 1, and would be well rendered here by the same word. Here the address of Peter was not a bearing witness, but a direction what they were to do.

untoward generation] Lit. *crooked*. The word is so translated Phil. ii. 15 and might be here. The words "crooked generation" are not strange to the A. V. (Deut. xxxii. 5), and the figure is made stronger by the literal rendering.

41—47. THE FIRST CONVERTS AND THEIR BEHAVIOUR.

41. *Then they that gladly received his word*] The oldest MSS. omit

and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all *things* common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all

gladly. The latter clause of the verse is more literally, *And there were added on that day about three thousand souls*, i.e. to the one hundred and twenty of whom the Church consisted when the day began.

42. *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine*] i.e. They allowed nothing to interfere with the further teaching which the Apostles no doubt gave to the newly baptized. The converts would naturally seek to hear all the particulars of the life of Him whom they had accepted as Lord and Christ, and such narratives would form the greatest part of the teaching of the Apostles at the first.

and fellowship] That communion, or holding all things common, of which a more full description is given in the following verses, and which would bind them most closely into one society.

breaking of bread] The earliest title of the Holy Communion and that by which it is mostly spoken of in Scripture. (See Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. x. 16, &c.) In consequence of the omission here and elsewhere of any mention of the wine, an argument has been drawn for communion in one kind. But it is clear from the way in which St Paul speaks of the bread and the cup in the same breath, as it were, that such a putting asunder of the two parts of the Sacrament which Christ united is unwarranted by the practice of the Church of the Apostles.

and in prayers] The Greek has the article here, and stress has sometimes been laid on this, as though the Church at this early date had some settled form of prayer. But it is enough to refer to i. 14, where the article is also found, but which few would wish to construe "they continued stedfastly in the prayer."

43. *And fear came upon every soul*] The mockers were silenced by what they saw and heard, and were deterred from further opposition even though they did not listen to the call to repentance.

wonders and signs] See v. 22.

44. *were together, and had all things common*] With the words of the angels still in their ears (i. 11), "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," the disciples were no doubt full of the thought that the return of Jesus was not far distant. Such an opinion spreading among the new disciples would make them ready to resign their worldly goods, and to devote all things to the use of their brethren. For so the spreading of a knowledge of Christ could be made the chief work of the whole body of believers.

45. *And sold their possessions, &c.*] For the money which resulted from such sales would be the most convenient form in which their bounty could be bestowed on those who needed it.

⁴⁵ *men*, as every *man* had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat *their* meat with gladness and single-
⁴⁷ ness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

as every man had need] Better, according as any man had need. We gather from this that the first converts kept their homes and things needful for themselves, but held the rest as a trust for the Church to be bestowed whenever need was seen. This is an earlier stage than that in which the money was brought and put at the disposal of the Apostles.

46. *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple*] The Greek is more emphatic. Render, **And day by day attending continually with one accord, &c.**

At the Temple they were likely to meet with the greatest number of devout listeners; and we shall find that the first Christians did not cease to be religious Jews, but held to all the observances of their ancient faith, its feasts, its ritual, and its hours of prayer, as far as they could do so consistently with their allegiance to Jesus. We find (xxi. 20—24) the elders of the Church in Jerusalem urgent on St Paul that he should shew his zeal for the Law by taking upon him the vow of a Nazarite, and should so quiet the scruples of Jews, and of such Christian brethren as were more zealous for the Law than St Paul himself.

and breaking bread from house to house] Perhaps better, *breaking bread at home*; though the A. V., if rightly understood, gives the sense very well. What is meant is, that the specially Christian institution of the breaking of bread was not a part of the service in the Temple, but was observed at their own homes, the congregations meeting now at one house now at another. The connection of the Lord's Supper with the Passover meal at its institution, made the Christian Sacrament essentially a service which could be celebrated, as at the first institution it was, in such a room as that where the Passover meal was eaten.

did eat their meat] i. e. took their food, their ordinary meals.

with gladness, &c.] because those who were able to contribute to the support of the poorer members of the Church were delighted to do so, and thus all over-anxious care for the morrow was removed from the whole community.

singleness of heart] Having but one end in view, that the faith of Christ should be spread abroad as widely as possible.

47. *praising God*] because their hearts were full of thankfulness for the knowledge of Jesus as His Christ.

having favour with all the people] As it was said of Christ, "the common people heard Him gladly" (Mark xii. 37), so it seems to have been with His Apostles. The first attack made on them is (iv. 1) by the priests, the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees.

And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved] The oldest MSS. agree in omitting *to the church*, and the literal rendering of

I—10. *Healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.*

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at ³ the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour. And a certain ² man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they

the most authoritative text is, **And the Lord added day by day together such as were in the way of salvation**, i.e. brought into the communion "such as" (literally) "were being saved," the work of whose salvation was begun but needed perseverance; who had set foot on the way and were heirs through hope of ultimate salvation. By this rendering the Greek words *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό* = to the same place, together, which in the Rec. Text are at the beginning of chapter iii., are taken into this verse in accordance with the authority of the oldest MSS.

III. 1—10. HEALING OF THE LAME MAN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE OF THE TEMPLE.

1. *Now Peter and John went up together*] The word *together* has been transferred to the previous verse. See the last note. The verb is in the imperfect tense, and would be more correctly rendered **were going up**. The Temple stood above the city on Mount Moriah.

into the temple] While earnestly labouring for the spread of Christ's teaching, they did not cast off regard for that schoolmaster which had been appointed to bring men to Christ.

at the hour of prayer] The preposition indicates the period of time towards which their movement tended, and may be well rendered *for the hour*, &c. They were on their way, and would get there at the time appointed for prayer.

We read in Scripture of three specified hours of prayer, in accordance with which the Psalmist speaks of his own custom (Ps. lv. 17), "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray." And in like manner Daniel prayed "three times a day" (Dan. vi. 10). The hour of morning prayer was the third hour, and Peter went up to the housetop to pray (Acts x. 9) about the sixth hour, which was noon, and the evening prayer was this to which Peter and John were going up.

being the ninth hour] At the Equinox this would be three o'clock in the afternoon, but when the daylight was longer it would be later, so that if there were 18 hours day and 6 hours of darkness, each hour of the day would be an hour and a half long, and the hours of the night only half an hour each. At such time the ninth hour would be at half-past four.

2. *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb*] There is the verb expressed in the original, and it should be translated *a certain man who was*, &c.

was carried] i.e. regularly every day, and the position in which he had been daily set for the greater part of his forty years' life (see iv. 22) made it certain that he would be widely and well known. So Bartimæus sat by the wayside to beg (Mark x. 46).

laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lift him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength,

whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful] The gateways of the Temple gave admission to the inner court from the court of the Gentiles and the court of the women; there were three on the north and the same number on the south, but the Beautiful Gate meant in this verse was probably the gate on the east which led from the court of the women. The other gates, Josephus says (*B. J.* v. 5. 3), were overlaid with gold and silver, but this one was "made of Corinthian bronze, and much surpassed in worth those enriched with silver and gold."

3. *asked an alms*] *Alms* is singular number, and was in early times spelt *almesse*, which is derived from the Greek ἐλεημοσύνη, which in German becomes *Almosen* = a gift of charity.

4. *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, &c.*] And doubtless, like Paul at Lystra (xiv. 9), "perceiving that he had faith to be healed." For the man's first act after his cure—"he entered into the temple" (v. 8)—may be taken as an indication of his devout frame of mind.

6. *Silver and gold have I none*] The Apostles, we may see from this, made no claim for themselves upon the contributions of the richer converts.

but such as I have give I thee] Better literally, **what I have that give I thee**. We are nowhere told how much time had passed since the day of Pentecost, and it is probable that this was not the first miracle which Peter wrought (see ii. 43). For he speaks as not without experience of what works God will enable him to do. His language is that of firm assurance, "what I have," though in a moment he adds "In the name of Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ of Nazareth] According to St John's account, the name Nazareth was included in the title on Christ's cross (John xix. 19), and we can see that the place was despised in the eyes of the Jews (John i. 46) from Nathanael's question to Philip. This despised origin, as well as the shameful death of Jesus, was a stumbling-block to the Jews.

rise up and walk] The best MSS. have only the last verb *walk*. So that the arguments which have been based on these words to shew that St Luke in the Acts has drawn his picture here from what is recorded of Christ's language (Luke v. 23) in the Gospel, fall to the ground.

7. *his feet and ankle bones*] The words in the original are found nowhere else in the N. T. They are of a technical character, and their

and he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with s
them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising
God. And all the people saw him walking and praising 9
God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms 10

use, together with the other features of exact description of the cripple's case, indicate that we have before us the language of the physician (Col. iv. 14). And it is hardly possible to dwell too strongly on indications of this kind, which indirectly mark in the history something which is likewise noted in the Epistles. Those who would assign the second century as the date of the composition of the Acts, must assume for their supposed writer the keenest appreciation of every slight allusion in the letters of St Paul, and at the same time an ability to let his knowledge peep out only in hints like that which we find in this verse. Such persons, while rejecting all that is miraculous in the story as we have it, ask us to believe in such a writer as would himself be almost a miracle, for his powers of observation and the skill with which he has employed them.

received strength] Though from want of use, they must have been withered before.

8. *and he leaping up stood*] There is no hesitation in the man's manner; he does not question the power, but obeys at once.

entered with them into the temple] He doubtless felt that this was the best visit he could make with his new powers, and he would be the more anxious to go there as Peter and John were going too.

leaping] For delight at his new strength he cannot put it too much in exercise. This exultant use of the gift was a part of his "praising God."

We can hardly fail to see, if we compare the narrative of this miracle with that of the similar one wrought at Lystra by St Paul (xiv.), to which we have already referred, that St Luke has used faithfully the materials with which he was furnished by "eye-witnesses," and has given the accounts as he received them without any colouring of his own. In this chapter we have a description such as a painter would desire; the scene is brought vividly before us, and all the characters are in lively action. It is just such an account as we find in St Mark's Gospel of the cure of the demoniac child (Mark ix. 14—27), and both are quite in accord with all that we know of St Peter's mode of speaking, and from St Peter it is most probable that the narrative in this chapter is derived. On the contrary, the story of the cure wrought at Lystra by St Paul is told in the fewest possible words and with no touch of the graphic power of which this description is so full. The difference bespeaks the faithfulness of the writer of the Acts, and shews us that he has left the narratives as they came to his hand, without any attempt to stamp on them an individuality of his own.

9. *all the people saw him*] There was abundance of testimony to the reality of the cure, and that by many persons who had seen the cripple for years. This the Jewish authorities (iv. 16) admit.

10. *and they knew that it was he, &c.*] The same verb is rendered

at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

II—26. *St Peter's discourse to the crowd.*

- 11 And as the lame *man* which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch
12 that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye *so* earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made
13 this *man* to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac,

(iv. 13) *they took knowledge*, and that sense is perhaps the better here. It can hardly have been intended to say that the whole of the people knew the man.

11—26. ST PETER'S DISCOURSE TO THE CROWD.

11. *And as the lame man which was healed held Peter, &c.*] The oldest MSS. give *And as he held Peter, &c.* The additional words have crept in from some marginal note of explanation.

the porch that is called Solomon's] As the name of Solomon was so intimately connected with the Jewish Temple, it is natural enough that one of its porches (or cloisters) should be called after him. There is no account of any such porch in Solomon's own Temple, but Josephus tells us (*Ant.* xx. 9. 7) that there was an eastern porch in Herod's Temple called by this name. The mention of this feature in the building is a sign that the writer, from whom St Luke drew, was one acquainted with the localities about which he speaks, and that the account was written before the fall of Jerusalem, or he would not have said *is called*, or if he had done so would have been convicted of inconsistency of language by those to whom his work was first presented.

12. *when Peter saw it*] i.e. their wonder, as may be inferred from his opening words.

he answered] Often used although no previous remark or question precedes. Cp. Acts v. 8, where Peter is said to have *answered* Sapphira, though she had said nothing, as far as we are told, and where the Apostle's words are a *question*.

why marvel ye at this?] Probably we should supply *man*, because the pronoun at the close of the verse is only the personal and not the demonstrative, and we should read "made *him* to walk," and not as the A. V. "made *this man* to walk."

look ye so earnestly] The verb is rendered "to fasten the eyes on" in v. 4.

by our own power] As he had done to the cripple, so also he makes it clear to the crowd that the name of Jesus is the power by which he has wrought.

and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. But ye ¹⁴ denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom ¹⁵ God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this ¹⁶ *man* strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is

13. *hath glorified his Son Jesus*] The Greek is not *vîbs* but *παῖς*, and should be rendered **servant**, and this would carry the mind back, as St Peter no doubt intended, to Isaiah xlii. 1, "Behold my *servant* whom I uphold," a passage which St Matthew (xii. 18) applies to Jesus.

denied him in the presence of Pilate] alluding to Pilate's question (John xix. 15), "Shall I crucify your king?" to which they answered, "We have no king but Cæsar."

when he was determined, &c.] Rather, **when he had given sentence to release him**. For Pilate had pronounced Jesus innocent (John xix. 4).

14. *But ye denied the Holy One and the Just*] Whom even the demoniac (Mark i. 24) had confessed to be "the Holy One of God."

desired a murderer] Barabbas, who had committed murder, Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 19.

15. *the Prince of life*] The same word applied to Jesus (Heb. xii. 2) is rendered "*author* and finisher of our faith," and in the same epistle (ii. 10) "*the captain* of their salvation." It is probably in the latter sense that St Peter, whose thoughts are on the Resurrection, uses the word here, thinking of Christ as the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Cor. xv. 20), but the other sense, that "in him was life" (John i. 4), is also embraced in the word.

whom God hath raised] Better, *whom God raised*, i. e. once for all.

whereof we are witnesses] The relative is here better referred to Christ, "*of whom* we are witnesses." Not merely did they bear witness of the Resurrection, though that was a most important portion of their testimony, but of all Christ's teaching and deeds. Cp. i. 22, where Matthias was chosen to be such a witness.

16. *And his name, &c.*] There is more force in retaining the order of the Greek, **And through faith in his name, his name hath made strong this man whom ye see and know**. This use of *name*=power, and even as an absolute equivalent for God, is very Jewish; cp. iv. 12. The usage grew out of such passages as Ps. cvi. 8, "He saved them for *His name's* sake." In the literature of the Jews great power was attributed to the name of God even when only inscribed, e.g. as it was said in tradition to have been on the rod of Moses. By this power he is reported to have wrought the miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness. But St Peter's language here explains that it is no such power of which he is now speaking, for the name of Jesus does not work the miracle *per se* but only because of the faith of the believer.

the faith which is by him] St Peter uses the like expression (1 Pet.

by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers. But *those things*, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when *the* times of refreshing shall come from

i. 21), "You who by Him do believe in God." Christ is "the *author and finisher* of our faith."

17. *I wot*] This antiquated word is the present tense of the verb to wit (A. S. *witan*)=to know, and its past tense is *I wist*. Had I wist=had I known.

through ignorance] Ignorance has many degrees and can arise from many causes. The Jewish multitude were ignorant from want of teaching, their rulers from mental perverseness in looking only on one part of the prophecies concerning the Messiah. Yet of both these it may be said that through ignorance (i.e. want of knowledge, however caused,) they crucified Jesus.

18. *by the mouth of all his prophets, &c.*] The best MSS. connect the pronoun *his* with the next clause. Read, **by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ should suffer.** The purpose of the whole of the Scripture is to set forth the redemption of men through the suffering of Christ. So that from the first mention of the bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman (Gen. iii. 15), there had been a constant chain of testimony that the Christ should suffer.

he hath so fulfilled] Turning your evil deed to a purpose of salvation.

19. *Repent ye therefore*] i.e. because you see the greatness of your offence.

and be converted] Lit. *turn again*, i.e. from the evil of your ways. The word *convert* has received much ongrowth of meaning since the A. V. was made. The same word is well rendered (xi. 21), "a great number believed and *turned* unto the Lord."

when the times of refreshing shall come] ὅπως ἂν cannot be translated *when* the times...*shall come*, but *that* the times...*may come*. These particles indicate a purpose, the accomplishment of which still lies in doubt. So the Apostle's argument is, Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, *that in this way* (i.e. by your penitence) the times of refreshing *may come*. The particles are rendered in this sense Acts xv. 17, "that the residue of men might [better *may*] seek after the Lord."

times of refreshing] The Greek word signifies "appointed times," i.e. which God hath appointed and which He keeps in His own power, but which the penitence of men will hasten. They are called "times of refreshing," i.e. peace and blessedness, for the Apostle describes them afterwards as the coming of the Christ. But by the prophecies which he quotes he shews that the refreshing is for those only who repent (v. 23) and hear the prophet whom God sends. The anticipation of

the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, ²⁰ which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven ²¹ must receive until the times of restitution of all *things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the ²²

a speedy return of Christ from heaven was common among the first believers. St Peter here does not directly state this opinion, but we can see how current it was from St Paul's second Epistle to the Thesalonians, where he finds it necessary to warn the Christians of that Church against the disquiet which the immediate expectation of the second Advent was causing among them.

20. *and he shall send*] The construction is continued from the previous verse. Read, *and that he may send*.

In the rest of this verse both the order of the words and the reading of the *Tex. Rec.* is different from that of the best MSS. The sentence should read: **the Christ which was appointed for you, even Jesus.** Not only is this the more authoritative reading but it agrees with the proofs which St Peter presently cites (*v.* 25), "Ye are the children of the covenant which God made with our fathers." The Christ, the Messiah, had been appointed and promised unto the Jewish nation, and now the promise of the covenant is fulfilled in Jesus.

21. *whom the heaven must receive*] and retain, as we are witnesses that He has been taken up into heaven.

until the times of restitution] Better, **restoration of all things**, i.e. at Christ's second coming. But this phrase, "the restoration of all things," is used in two senses in N.T. First it is said (Matt. xvii. 11; Mark ix. 12) that Elias must "first come and restore all things." There it signifies the beginning of Christ's Kingdom. As Christ's death was for all men's redemption, the restoration of all things may be said to have begun then. In the present verse the words have reference to the time when the course of that restoration shall be completed.

which God hath spoken] Better, *of which* [i. e. *times*] *God hath spoken*.

all his holy prophets] *All* is omitted in the best MSS.

since the world began] See *v.* 18.

22. *For Moses truly said*] *Truly* is here the rendering of the particle *μὲν*, and is likely to be misunderstood, as though it meant *verily*. Read **For indeed Moses said**. Here the Apostle cites the prophecies to which he has been alluding. First from Deut. xviii. 15 he points out that the prophet who had been promised was to be of their brethren, as Moses had been. This was a comparison which the Jews themselves were fond of making, and they often identified the prophet of whom Moses spake with the Messiah. Thus the *Midrash Rabbah* on Eccl. i. 9 says, "Rabbi Berakhiah in the name of Rabbi Yizkhak [Isaac] says: 'As was the former redeemer so shall the latter redeemer be.' While of the former redeemer it is said (Exod. iv. 20), 'And Moses took his wife and his sons and set them upon an ass,' so of the latter: for it says

fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all *things* whatsoever he shall say
 23 unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be de-
 24 stroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have
 25 spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God

(Zech. ix. 9), 'He is lowly and riding upon an ass.' And while the former redeemer brought down manna, as it says (Exod. xvi. 4), 'Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you,' so the latter redeemer will bring down manna. For it says (Ps. lxxii. 16), 'There shall be abundance of corn in the land.' And as the former redeemer caused the well to spring up (see Numb. xxi. 17), so the latter redeemer shall also cause the waters to spring up. For it says (Joel iii. 18), 'A fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.'"

him shall ye hear] i.e. those who have "ears to hear" when the prophet comes and speaks. The next verse shews that all the nation were not included in the "ye."

24. *all the prophets from Samuel*] To other prophecies St Peter only makes a general reference. We learn (*Midrash Shemuel*, c. 24) that Samuel was called by the Jews "Rabban," the chief and teacher of the prophets, and there are several reasons why he is put in this foremost place. (1) We never read of a school of the prophets before his time. (2) His mother Hannah is the first person in Holy Writ who speaks of the Messiah (1 Sam. ii. 10), "God's anointed." (3) Jewish tradition says that the man of God who came to Eli (1 Sam. ii. 27) was Elkanah. The Targum on 1 Sam. x. 12, "But who is their *father*?" explains *father* by *Rabbi*, and refers the word to Samuel, so that the question in that verse would imply: "Why do you wonder at Saul among the prophets? Who is it that instructs the prophets? Is it not Samuel? And has not Saul been with him just now and been anointed by him?" All this could be said without the speaker having any knowledge that Saul was to be king. For the use of *father* as=*teacher* or *Rabbi* cf. Elisha's cry to Elijah (2 Kings ii. 12), "My father, my father."

as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days] The verbs are aorist. Read, *as many as spake they also told of these days*. The latter verb is without the preposition *πρὸ* in the best MSS., and so is not=*foretold* but *told*. The prophet was one who spoke *for* God, gave a message from Him, but was not necessarily a foreteller of the future.

25. *Ye are the children* [better, *sons*] *of the prophets*] i.e. of the same race, and therefore what the prophets spake is meant for you. The prophet *foretold* by Moses is raised up for you.

and [sons] of the covenant] Therefore, heirs to its promises and its

made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, ²⁶ sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from *his* iniquities.

I—12. *First arrest of the Apostles. Their hearing and defence.*

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the ⁴ captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

obligations. So (2 Kings xiv. 14) *hostages* are called literally *sons of the pledgings* or compacts.

saying unto Abraham] Gen. xxii. 18.

26. *Unto you first*] That the Jews might first receive the blessing themselves, and then spread it abroad.

God, having raised up] Not spoken here of the resurrection of Jesus, but recalling the promise of Moses (v. 22) that a prophet should be raised up and sent unto the people.

his Son Jesus] **his Servant** (as v. 13). The best authorities omit *Jesus*.

sent him to bless you] by the times of refreshing alluded to v. 19. The way and means to which blessing is to be by the repentance and turning again to which the Apostle has been exhorting them.

IV. 1—12. FIRST ARREST OF THE APOSTLES. THEIR HEARING AND DEFENCE.

1. *And as they spake unto the people*] The movements of the Apostles had by this time become an object of concern to the authorities in Jerusalem. See their complaint (v. 28). There is no note of time at the beginning of chap. iii. to indicate what period had elapsed since Pentecost before the lame man was healed. But news soon spread in the city as we can learn from the events related in the previous chapter.

the priests] Those whose duty it was at the time to take charge of the Temple services, and who probably had taken offence at the multitudes assembled in the Temple court. The division of the priests was into twenty-four courses, each of which was to serve in the Temple for a week, see 1 Chron. xxiv. 1—19; 2 Chron. xxiii. 8. It was during such service in the order of his course, that the promise of the birth of John the Baptist was made to Zechariah the priest (Luke i. 5—8). Some authorities read *high priests*.

and the captain of the temple] There is mentioned in the O. T. an officer whose title is "the ruler of the house of God" (1 Chron. ix. 11; 2 Chron. xxxi. 13; Neh. xi. 11). He was not a military officer, but had charge of the guard of priests and Levites who watched the Temple at night. There are two titles given to such an officer in the later writings

of the Jews, (1) the *Memunneh* (Mishna *Tamid* 1.), a kind of prefect of the Temple guard, and (2) a higher officer called "the captain of the mountain of the [Lord's] house." (Mishna *Middoth* 11.) Rabbenu Shimshon describes this second officer as "the Commander who was set over every watch of those that watched in the less sacred portion of the Temple." He was apparently a civil as well as religious official, for we find (v. 26) that he goes with "the officers" to make the second arrest of the Apostles.

and the Sadducees] This was the name of one of the most influential sects among the Jews in our Lord's time. Their name has been variously explained. The Jewish authorities state that the name, which they write *Tsedukim*, is derived from *Tsadok* (Zadok) the proper name, and that thus they are "the followers of Zadok." The Zadok from whom they derive the title is said to have been a disciple of Antigonus of Socho. This Antigonus is the second in order of the Jewish Fathers whose sayings are recorded in the *Pirke Aboth*, and the commentators thereon mention two of his pupils, Zadok and Baithos, to the latter of whom, and to his followers, they attribute the teaching that "there was nothing for them in the world to come." But it is perhaps more probable, from their constant connection with the priests, that the name of the Sadducees was derived from the more famous Zadok who became high priest in the reign of King Solomon (1 Kings ii. 35). We read of the distinction of his descendants as "the sons of Zadok" and "the priests the Levites of the seed of Zadok" even as late as the description of Ezekiel's Temple (Ezek. xl. 46, xlv. 15). The probability of this priestly descent of the sect of the Sadducees is strengthened by the way in which they are mentioned Acts v. 17, "Then rose up *the high priest and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees)*." The derivation which makes their name the plural of the Hebrew adjective *Tsaddik*=righteous, has not much authority to support it.

The teaching of the Sadducees is partly described Acts xxiii. 8. They "say that there is no resurrection neither angel nor spirit." In addition to this they attached no authority to the Oral Law, while the Pharisees maintained that the greater portion thereof had been transmitted to them from Moses. The Sadducees also taught the doctrine of the freedom of the will of men. The statement that they rejected all the Old Testament Scriptures except the Pentateuch has no confirmation in Josephus and has arisen from a confusion of the Sadducees with the Samaritans. Josephus (*Antiq.* XVIII. 1. 4) says "their doctrine is accepted only by a few, but yet by those of the greatest dignity," a statement fully borne out by the influential position in which we find them when the history of the Acts opens. They play no very prominent part in the Gospel history, because the teaching of Christ while on earth was directed more specially against the formalism and outward show of religion that prevailed among the Pharisees. It is only when the doctrine of the resurrection begins to be preached that the hostility of the Sadducees makes itself apparent.

came upon them] to arrest them. The same word is used as of the action of the chief captain (xxiii. 27), "Then *came I* (upon them) with an army and rescued him." See note there.

being grieved that they taught the people, and preached² through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they³ laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them⁴ which heard the word believed; and the number of the

2. *being grieved*] Better, *being troubled*. The word signifies *thoroughly pained*. It is used (xvi. 18) of St Paul's feeling when the "damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" cried after him at Philippi.

that they taught the people] One objection which the scribes and priests would feel towards the Apostles would be that they were "unlearned and ignorant men" (v. 13), and so not deemed fit to teach.

and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead] Better, *and published in Jesus*. This would rouse the feelings of the Sadducees. The resurrection is said to be *in* Jesus, because His resurrection was a pledge that all should rise. "In Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22). The language of the Apostles in the Acts does not dwell on this as a consequence of the resurrection of Jesus, for like all Jewish teaching, what they said was historical rather than doctrinal.

3. *and put them in hold*] i.e. in prison. The word means *ward*, safe keeping. And it is worth noticing on the use of it, that the Jews only employed imprisonment for this precautionary purpose. It was not a mode of punishment with them, and where we find mention of it so used in the Scripture records, the authorities who inflicted it were not Jewish.

unto the next day: for it was now eventide] The Jews were not allowed to give judgment in the night, and their day ceased with the twelfth hour. It was already about the ninth hour when Peter and John were going up to the Temple (iii. 1), so that before the address of Peter and the arrest of him and John was completed it would be too late to enter on a judicial enquiry. The Rabbis founded the prohibition on Jer. xxi. 12, "O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment *in the morning*." In Mishna *Sanhedrin* IV. 1 it is said: "Judgments about money may be commenced in the day and concluded in the night, but judgments about life must be begun in the day and concluded in the day." And even the rule about the declaration of the new moon, which was looked on as a judicial proceeding, is similarly regulated (Mishna *Rosh ha-Shanah* III. 1), and it may not be declared unless the examination of the witnesses, and all other preliminaries enjoined before its proclamation, be completed before dark.

4. *Howbeit*] Better, *But*, i.e. not being deterred by the arrest of the Apostles.

many of them which heard the word believed] on Jesus; for Peter had set Him before them as that Prophet concerning whom Moses had spoken.

and the number of the men was] [better, *came to*] *about five thousand*] That is, the society had been increased by nearly two thousand converts since the day of Pentecost (ii. 41).

5 men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the
6 morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas

5. *And it came to pass on the morrow*] When the investigation was permitted to be held.

that their rulers, and elders] Here we see that the party of the Sadducees was the party of power and influence at this time.

and scribes] For these were not only the copyists, but the interpreters and expounders of the Law to the people, and any new teaching would naturally be disliked by them. On the difference between Christ's teaching and that of the scribes see Matt. vii. 29.

6. *and Annas the high priest*] was there. The verb is understood. Annas (called Ananus in Josephus), son of one Seth, was made high-priest (A.D. 7) by the Roman governor Quirinus [Cyrenius], and so continued till A.D. 14 (Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 2. 1). We do not find that he was ever again appointed to the office, though St Luke here calls him high-priest. But the way in which he is mentioned at the time of the trial of Christ, who was brought, as we read, before Annas first (John xviii. 13), and sent by him afterwards bound unto Caiaphas, shews that, though not actual high-priest, yet his position in the eyes of the people of Jerusalem was one which justified them in bringing Jesus to him as soon as he was seized. It is difficult to explain from the words of the New Test. the relation of these two men in their office. Caiaphas is expressly called high-priest by St John, yet we are not told why Christ was not at once brought to him. It may be that one was acting high-priest, while the other was *nasi* or president of the Sanhedrin. Moreover it is not improbable that Annas, having been high-priest before, and only deposed from the office by the Roman governor Gratus, would, both during the short high-priesthood of his son Eleazar (A.D. 16), and the longer high-priesthood of Caiaphas, his son-in-law (A.D. 25—37), exercise much influence by reason of his age and experience, and might, from his former tenure of the office, even be spoken of as high-priest. It is clear that he was at the head of one of the most influential Jewish families, for before his death, five of his sons had been high-priests (Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 9. 1). We can see from Luke iii. 2, where both Annas and Caiaphas are said to be high-priests, that there was some laxity in the common use of the title. So far only does the New Testament carry us, but when we come to examine the Old Testament, and the records of later Jewish literature, there seems every reason to conclude that the expressions which seem somewhat hard to reconcile are exactly those which would naturally be employed. We find that Moses, who is himself counted (Ps. xcix. 6) God's priest on the same level with Aaron, anointed not Aaron only, but his sons at the same time (Exod. xl. 12—15) to be high-priests. Also (Numb. xxxi. 6) Phinehas the son of Eleazar is sent to the war against the Midianites with "the holy instruments" (i.e. the Urim and Thummim), which shews that he was high-priest at the same time as Eleazar his father. Again in later times (2 Kings xxv. 18) we have mention made of "Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest," which the Targum ex-

the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander,

plains as "high-priest and Sagan" or deputy high-priest. The Talmud makes it very clear that there was a special arrangement for providing on some occasions such a deputy for the high-priest. Thus (Mishna *Foma* i. 1) it says, "Seven days before the day of atonement they remove the high-priest from his house to the chamber of the assessors, and they provide another priest in his place lest any disqualification should befall him." On this passage Rashi's note is "*to be high-priest instead of him*," and a little later on in the same treatise (T. B. *Foma* 39 a) it is said concerning the services of the day of atonement: "Rabbi Khanina the Sagan of the priests (and so one qualified to speak on the duties of the office) said: Why does the Sagan stand on the right hand of the high-priest (when the lots are being cast for the goats)?" The answer is, "So that if any disqualification should befall him, the Sagan may go in (to the Holy of Holies) and perform the service in his stead." Cp. also *Midrash Rabbah* on Leviticus (par. 20 *ad fin.*). "If there was any defilement on Aaron, Eleazar served (as high-priest), and if there was any defilement on Eleazar, Ithamar served." (On the slight matters which caused such ceremonial defilement, see note on x. 28.) And in the same chapter we find "Had not Elisheba (Exod. vi. 23, the wife of Aaron) joy in this world who saw five crowns (i.e. subjects for rejoicing) in one day? her brother-in-law (Moses) a king (Deut. xxxiii. 5); her brother (Naashon) *nasi*, i.e. president, of the tribe of Judah; her husband high-priest; her two sons, sagans of the high-priest; and Phinehas her grandson anointed for the war." These notices make it clear that from the earliest times down to a period posterior to the date of the Acts, there were occasions, and these not unfrequent, when two men were called high-priests at the same time.

That one who had been high-priest should still retain the title may be seen from the principle laid down in several places in the Talmud, (see Mishna *Shekalim* vi. 6, *ed. princ. Jerus.*), viz. that "you may elevate in a sacred office or service, but you cannot bring down," as with us "once a Bishop, always a Bishop." The illustration given is that you might lay the shewbread on a marble table first, and afterwards on a golden one, but the contrary order of proceeding was forbidden. (For another illustration, see note on vi. 3.) Therefore Annas, having been high-priest, could, according to Jewish usage, never be called by any lower title.

The relationship between Annas and Caiaphas and the seniority of the former is enough to explain the conduct of the crowd in bringing Jesus to him first: while the omission of the word high-priest (Acts iv. 6) with the name of Caiaphas is no more a proof that he was not also known to be high-priest, as well as Annas, than the words of St Mark's Gospel (xvi. 7), "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter," can be made evidence that Peter was not one of the disciples. For a similar phrase cp. v. 29 and the note there.

and Caiaphas] He was also called Joseph, and was son-in-law to Annas.

and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good

and John] This is the same name as Johanan, and Lightfoot concludes that this person was the famous Johanan ben Zaccai, who by his influence with Vespasian procured permission for many of the Jews to settle in Jamnia (Yavneh) after the destruction of their city, and himself became head of the synagogue there.

and Alexander] of whom nothing is known more than can be gathered from this mention of him.

and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest] And these would probably all be of the Sadducees' party.

were gathered together at (MSS. in) Jerusalem] These words which A. V. places at the end of v. 6 are in the Greek a part of v. 5, and it is better to insert them there, because the MSS. of most authority make the names in v. 6 all nominatives and subjects to a new verb. It may have been that some of the authorities were not residents in Jerusalem, but had to be summoned.

7. *And when they had set them in the midst]* The council or Sanhedrin was assembled as the *Beth-din*, in the house of judgment.

they asked, By what power, or by what name, &c.] For *power*, the original has the same word as is used so often of Christ's miracles, and generally rendered *mighty works*. *Name* is=authority. The force of the expression is perhaps felt better, if the preposition *ἐν* be rendered literally *in* rather than *by*; certainly so in the second member of the sentence.

8. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost]* The Spirit of God upon him had changed him "into another man." Cf. 1 Sam. x. 6.

said unto them, Ye rulers of the people] For this was the highest judicial tribunal which the Jews had.

and elders of Israel] The best authorities omit *of Israel*. The council was composed of the *chief priests*, i.e. the heads of each of the twenty-four classes into which the priests were divided, the *scribes*, men who were skilled in all the Jewish law, and the *elders*, grave and learned men chosen to complete the number, which is stated to have been in all seventy-one.

9. *if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man]* Both the nouns are without the article. Read "a good deed done to an impotent man." Of=concerning, as we still use it in "to speak of." St Peter's words imply that perhaps there would be some other charge brought against them, for teachers of a new doctrine who had in a brief space gained five thousand followers must have attracted much notice in Jerusalem. Nor is it long before we hear (vi. 13) blasphemy "against the Temple and the law" laid to the charge of Stephen, whose

deed done to the impotent man, by what *means* he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of ¹⁰ Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this *man* stand here before you whole. This is the ¹¹ stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither ¹² is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

preaching (for this accusation precedes Stephen's defence) must have been of the same character as that of Peter and John.

by what means he is made whole] The Greek has *this* (man), the demonstrative pronoun, for the man was there in the council-house to be seen by all. See v. 14.

10. *by the name of Jesus*] Read *in* the name, as before.

whom ye crucified] i.e. by the Roman soldiers. So (2 Sam. xii. 9) David is said to have killed Uriah, though it is added "by the sword of the children of Ammon."

even by him] The Greek seems rather to refer back to the former clause of the verse, and to be better rendered *even in this* (name).

11. *This* (i.e. Jesus) *is the stone which was set at nought of you* [*the builders*] There is the definite article in the original. The council are fitly called the builders, for on them depended the whole religious and civil government of the people. St Peter, with his mind now enlightened to apply the Scriptures, uses the words of the Psalmist (cxviii. 22) as spoken prophetically of Christ. Christ had already (Matt. xxi. 42) applied these words to Himself and to the way in which He was being rejected of the Jews, in the close of one of His parables which the Pharisees felt had been spoken against them.

which is become the head of the corner] Christ, now exalted into heaven, is no longer the despised, but has become the most important, stone in the new building of the Christian society, cp. Eph. ii. 20—22. St Peter uses this quotation in his Epistle (1 Pet. ii. 7), and joins with it a passage (Isa. xxviii. 16) where the like figure is employed prophetically of the Messiah, "the foundation stone laid in Zion."

12. *Neither is there salvation in any other*] Rather, *And our salvation is not in any other*. The article with the noun (*ἡ σωτηρία*) seems thus better expressed. St Peter thus intimates that the cure of the lame man is only a sign of the power of salvation for the soul which was in Jesus. The people were to draw from the effect produced by "Arise and walk," the conclusion that the same power could as surely give the greater blessing, "thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 5).

given among men] Communicated to men by God, as a means of salvation.

whereby we must be saved] Through whom we must of necessity seek our salvation if we would be saved.

13—22. *The Apostles are dismissed unpunished.*

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they
 14 had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against
 15 it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What
 16 shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell

13—22. THE APOSTLES ARE DISMISSED UNPUNISHED.

13. *the boldness*] The word implies freedom and readiness of speech such as would not be expected from the unlearned.

of Peter and John] Here we have evidence that not all the speeches which were made are reported by St Luke, for we have no record of any word spoken by John, yet his boldness of speech, no less than St Peter's, is observed by the council. Christ's speeches had produced a like effect (John vii. 15).

ignorant men] The Greek signifies *plebeian*, as opposed to noble men. Render, **common**.

they took knowledge of them] These words have been interpreted as though they meant that the members of the Sanhedrin now for the first time discovered the relation in which the two Apostles stood to Jesus. Those who press such a rendering must overlook the force of the very same verb as used in iii. 10, "They *knew* that it was he which sat for alms." The men of whom this is said had known the cripple for years, but now observed in addition that he was a cripple no longer, though still the same man whom they had so long seen begging. Just so with the Jewish authorities; they could hardly fail to have known the connection of the preachers with Jesus after the sermon on the day of Pentecost and the events which followed it, and now they *further* (ἐπι) notice that as the Master's words had been powerful, so there was like power in the language of those who had been with Him. We are told (John xviii. 15) of one disciple, taken always to be St John himself, who was known to the high-priest before the Crucifixion.

14. It has been asked on this verse: Why the sight of the healed man so utterly confounded the judges that they had not a word to say. We may see from what happened afterwards that there were men in the council not without the thought that God was really working through the Apostles. Gamaliel says (v. 39) "If this work be of God," and if this feeling operated in him, the recognized head of the Jewish court, it is not unlikely that others were silent with the consideration that "haply they might be fighting against God."

15. *to go aside out of the council*] To leave the council chamber, while the members of the council discussed what should be done.

16. *manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem*] Because all the

in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*. But that it spread ¹⁷ no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that *they* speak henceforth to no man in this name. And ¹⁸ they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John ¹⁹ answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak *the things* which we ²⁰ have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened ²¹

inhabitants knew the beggar at the Temple-gate, and that he had been lame all his life. There could only be two grounds on which, in reference to the cure of the cripple, the Apostles could be worthy of punishment: (1) If it were a case of imposture, but this nobody in the council or anywhere else insinuated, or (2) if the miracle had been wrought by some unlawful agency (Deut. xiii.). The question of the Sanhedrin points in this direction, "By what power have ye done this?" But Peter from the first (iii. 13) had ascribed the miracle to the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," and again testifies that it is God through Jesus Christ that hath made the man whole. So that there was no charge possible on the second ground.

17. *But that it spread*] i. e. the fame of the miracle and the consequent belief in the Divinity of Jesus.

let us straitly threaten them] The best MSS. omit the word here rendered *straitly*. The literal translation of the Received Text is "let us threaten them with a threat," a Hebrew mode of expression often imitated in the N.T., but apparently not found here in the earliest copies.

in this name] The preposition here is *ἐν*, not *ἐν*, as in v. 7. The force of it is the same which it has in John xii. 16, "they remembered that these things were written *of* him." The Apostles were forbidden to preach about the name, i. e. the authority and Divinity, of Jesus.

18. *And they called them*] back again into the council chamber.

and commanded them] The verb is frequently used of the injunctions which our Lord gave that His miraculous deeds should not be spread abroad (Mark vi. 8; Luke v. 14, &c.). The pronoun *them* is not found in the best MSS.

19. *Peter and John*] Both alike express their determination to publish the news of Christ's life and resurrection. The reason why both names are here mentioned may be that each was separately appealed to for a promise to desist. For an instance of like firmness in a good cause cp. 2 Macc. vii. 30.

judge ye] Come to whatever decision you please. "We are not careful to answer you in this matter."

20. *the things which we have seen and heard*] Better, *which we saw and heard*. For their testimony related to the whole life of Jesus.

21. *further threatened*] This was all they could venture on, because the multitude knew that the lame man had been healed, and that there

them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men* glorified²² God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23—31. *The Apostles released. Their Prayer and its Answer.*

²³ And being let go, they went to their own *company*, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto²⁴ them. And when they heard *that*, they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God,

was no charge against the Apostles for which they deserved punishment. They could not say that the miracle was untrue, for there was the man standing by, and proving its reality; and they could not inflict a punishment "for a good deed," nor could they find any ground for a charge in the declaration that the man had been healed in the name of Jesus.

how they might punish]=on what pretext, or, in what way, without enraging the populace.

all men glorified God] St Peter's speech had made it clear whence the power to heal was given. See iii. 13.

22. *the man was above forty years old*] To one who looked on the circumstances with a physician's eye, as St Luke would (Col. iv. 14), this feature would be most noticeable. For limbs unused shrink and wither, and become disproportionate to the other parts of the frame. The physician's description is also evident in the two unique words (*βάρεις* and *σφύρα*) which are used (iii. 7) to describe the cure of the cripple.

on whom this miracle of healing was shewed] The word here used for miracle=sign. This the A.V. has endeavoured to represent by the use of the verb *shewed*. Lit., "on whom this *sign* of healing was wrought."

23—31. THE APOSTLES RELEASED. THEIR PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER.

23. *to their own company*] Perhaps still abiding in the upper room which they had occupied before Pentecost. Because St Peter on a later occasion (xii. 12) made his way, after his deliverance from prison, to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark where many were gathered together praying, some have thought that this was the house where the Apostles had dwelt from the first. Such men at such a time would have neither means (see iii. 6) nor inclination to change from house to house. And Christ's injunction (Luke x. 7), "Go not from house to house," was given with a purpose which the Apostles would be likely to bear in mind and act upon.

24. *And when they heard that* (better *it*)] The Greek=*and having heard*.

they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said] The words

which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David ²⁵ hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain *things*? The kings of the ²⁶ earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast ²⁷ anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gen-

of the prayer which follows have so direct a reference to the circumstances which had just occurred that we cannot interpret otherwise than that to the prayer, uttered by the lips of one, all the rest, with one mind, pronounced fervent *Amens*. "The author (says Zeller) takes no forbidden liberty when he collects the concordant expressions of individuals into one common expression."

Lord] Lit. *Master*. The word is not often used of God (Luke ii. 29) or Christ, but it is worth notice that St Peter (2 Pet. ii. 1) and St Jude (4) apply it to Jesus.

thou art God] The words *art God* are not in the oldest MSS. but the clause reads, *O Lord, thou that hast made, &c.*

25. In the first part of this verse there is some confusion in the Greek text. The most authoritative reading may be translated *who by the Holy Ghost [through] the mouth of our father David thy servant hast said*. From the *Rec. Text* there has been omitted "the Holy Ghost," and perhaps the preposition *by* was repeated before "the mouth." But the order in which the Greek words stand makes it difficult to see what has happened, for even in the best MSS. their arrangement is much involved.

The Apostle now proceeds to apply the words of the second Psalm, which has been admitted by the Jews themselves to be Messianic, to the circumstances under which Christ was put to death.

Why did the heathen rage] Better, *the nations*, or *the Gentiles*, as it is rendered v. 27.

The Psalm in its first application probably referred to some revolt against the king of Israel. We have such a revolt mentioned in David's reign (2 Sam. viii.), where the Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites and other nations were conquered by David, after being in vain rebellion.

The words of the Psalm are quoted from the Septuagint.

27. *For of a truth*] Here the best MSS. insert the words *in this city*. The Apostle proceeds here to apply the language of the Psalmist to the events preceding the Crucifixion. The insertion of *in this city* is very natural under such circumstances.

against thy holy child Jesus] Read here, *Servant* Jesus, as iii. 13, for the original is the same though differently translated in the A.V.

whom thou hast anointed] By the descent of the Holy Ghost at His Baptism. (Matt. iii. 16.)

both Herod] The representative of the rulers of the Jews. This Herod was Antipas the son of Herod the Great by his Samaritan wife

23 tiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for
 to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined
 29 before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threaten-
 ings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness
 30 *they* may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to
 heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the
 31 name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had
 prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled
 together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and
 they spake the word of God with boldness.

Malthace. He was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Luke iii. 19), and because our Lord belonged to Galilee Pilate took occasion to send Jesus to be examined by him, as Herod was in Jerusalem to keep the feast of the Passover.

and Pontius Pilate] who was the Roman Governor, and so in his person were represented many nations at this time under the sway of Rome. His officials and soldiers would be drawn from all lands, and the mockery to which Jesus was exposed at their hands might well be described as the rage of the Gentiles.

Pontius Pilate] was the sixth Roman procurator of Judæa; he was appointed A.D. 25—6 in the twelfth year of Tiberius, and he continued to hold the office till A.D. 36, when he was sent to Rome by Vitellius under an accusation brought against him by the Samaritans. Of his after life and his death there are many legends, but no history.

28. *for to do, &c.]* God made the passions, which the enemies of Jesus indulged, to be the instruments for working out His will. So men when they suppose they are choosing their own way, have the ends thereof shapen by God “rough-hew them how they will.” Their misdeeds are made to execute the will of God, yet they are not on that account exempt from blame.

29. *behold their threatenings]* The Apostles are not disheartened, they are only drawing near to God for aid lest they should be in danger of becoming so.

with all boldness] The same freedom of speech which (iv. 13) had been afforded to them when they were before the council. Cp. Christ’s promise that this should be so. (Luke xxi. 15.)

30. *by stretching forth, &c.]* Lit. *while thou stretchest forth*. Thus the mighty works were to be a sign and testimony to the words which the Apostles spake. For as had been said of their Master, none could do the works which they did except God were with him. (John iii. 2.)

by the name of thy holy child Jesus] Here we have the same word as in v. 27. Read “thy holy **Servant** Jesus.”

31. *the place was shaken]* That they might feel at once that the God of all nature, to whom they had appealed (v. 24), was among them. In their immediate need an immediate answer is vouchsafed, and a token with it that their prayer was heard. Cp. xvi. 26 of the shaking of the prison at Philippi after the prayers of Paul and Silas.

32—37. *Unanimity and Love among the first Christians.*

And the multitude of them that believed were of one ³² heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the *things* which he possessed was his own; but they had all *things* common. And with great power gave the ³³ apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any ³⁴ among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors

spake the word of God] i.e. wherever they found occasion and opportunity, neglecting the threats of the council, and endowed with the boldness for which they had prayed.

32—37. UNANIMITY AND LOVE AMONG THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

32. *of one heart and of one soul*] A Hebrew form of expressing complete accord. Thus (1 Chron. xii. 38) "all the rest of Israel were of *one heart* to make David king," and (Jer. xxxii. 39) "I will give them *one heart and one way*."

neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own] It is more emphatic in the Greek, *and not one of them said*, &c. Each felt that he held his possessions only as a trust, and if occasion called for it, they were to be given up. Such love towards one another, Christ had foretold, should be a mark of His disciples (John xiii. 35). All those who have sketched a perfect society, as Plato in his *Republic*, and Sir Thos. More in his *Utopia*, have placed among their regulations this kind of community of goods which was established by the first Christians. In theory it is the perfection of a commonwealth, but there is need of perfection in the citizens before it can be realized. There can be no question that an expectation of Christ's immediate return from heaven, acting along with the unity of thoughts and feeling, made these men willing to part with their possessions and goods, there being, as we shall see from the case of Ananias, no constraint upon them to do so.

33. *And with great power gave the apostles witness*] [Better, *their witness*.] The Greek verb implies a great deal more than our English *gave*. It is the word so constantly used for *paying a debt* (Matt. xviii. 25; Luke vii. 42), or *rendering an account* (Matt. xii. 36; Heb. xiii. 17). So that there is implied in it the sense of *obligation* under which the Apostles felt themselves to lie of declaring "the things which they saw and heard" (v. 20).

and great grace was upon them all] i.e. like their Master, while experiencing the favour of God, they were also finding favour with men. Cp. Acts v. 13.

34. *Neither was there any among them that lacked*] The A. V. omits the word *for*, which is represented in the Greek and is needed for the sense. "*For* neither was there, &c." This was one reason for their favour among men. All could see and admire the spirit of self-sacrifice which was exhibited by what they were doing.

of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the
 35 *things* that were sold, and laid *them down* at the apostles'
 feet: and distribution was made unto every man according
 36 as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was sur-
 named Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of
 37 consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, having

brought the prices of the things that were sold] The language here expressly avoids saying that these men sold all they had. They sold some things, and the sum realized by what was sold was offered to the common store. We never hear that a similar fund was raised in any place except Jerusalem.

35. *and laid them down at the apostles' feet*] A significant act, whereby it was shewn that they gave the Apostles entire control over the bestowal of these sums. For the figure, cp. Ps. viii. 6, and Cicero *pro Flacco* (xxvii. § 68), *ante pedes praeitoris in foro expensum est auri pondo centum paullo minus*.

and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need] Better, *unto each according as any had need*. There were no doubt many who were not in need, and they of course lived on their own. The distribution was intended only for the needy, as widows, &c., and for those who could not otherwise support themselves while they took part, as many did, in the active propagation of the new faith. It may be, too, that some were deprived of the means of support because they had become Christians. Cp. the threat of the authorities, John ix. 22.

36. *And Joses*] The same name as *Joseph*, which form the oldest MSS. give.

who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas] He was the companion of St Paul in his first missionary journey (Acts xiii. 2), and is often mentioned by St Luke. He was invited by St Paul to join him on his second journey, but as they disagreed about taking John Mark with them, they did not labour again, as far as we know, in the same field, and the writer leaves Barnabas (xv. 39) with the mention that "he took Mark and sailed to Cyprus."

which is, being interpreted] The explanation is added for the sake of Theophilus, who may have had no knowledge of the Hebrew (see i. 19).

son of consolation] More probably, *son of exhortation*. The Greek may be thus rendered, and the Hebrew noun *nebuah* is from the same root as the common word for *prophet*. The title may have been given to Barnabas from his ability as a preacher (xi. 23), though in this he seems (Acts xiv. 12) to have been less prominent than St Paul, as most men must have been. In describing the work of Barnabas in xi. 23 the verb used, "he exhorted," is that from which the noun in this verse is derived, and is akin to the word "Paraclete," which is so often translated "Comforter" when applied to the Holy Ghost, but rendered "advocate" in 1 John ii. 1 when used of the intercession of Jesus.

a Levite] The Levites in the Holy Land had no inheritance given to

land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

I—II. *Account of Ananias and Sapphira.*

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his 5

them, but were scattered through all the tribes; the same regulation may not, however, have applied to the Levites in other countries; and we are not informed where the field was situated which Barnabas sold. He may also have been a married man, and have held lands from his marriage.

of the country of Cyprus] The island still so called in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. We find Jews settled there in the Maccabean times (1 Macc. xv. 23). It was one of the places to which Paul and Barnabas went in their missionary journey, and it had been previously visited by some of the Christian teachers who were driven from Jerusalem by the persecution which succeeded the death of Stephen (Acts xi. 19).

37. *having land*] Lit. *a field*. It seems likely that Joses is chosen as an example of the primitive liberality of the Christian body, because there was something remarkable in the kind of gift or the nature of the sacrifice which he made.

V. 1—11. ACCOUNT OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

The narrative with which this chapter commences is one which none but a veracious narrator would have inserted where it stands. The last chapter concludes with a description of the unity of heart and soul which prevailed among the brethren, and expressly notices that all were filled with the Holy Ghost. But as among the twelve Apostles there was a Judas, so into the infant Church there had intruded two at least whose professions were not sincere, and who were unworthy of the gifts of grace which, with the rest, they had received. The offence of Ananias and Sapphira shewed contempt for God, vanity and ambition in the offenders, and utter disregard of the corruption which they were bringing into the society. Such sin, committed in despite of the light which they possessed, called for a special mark of Divine indignation, and to those who, likewise filled with the Spirit, knew all that had been done and why it was done, there is no shock produced by the terrible doom of the sinners, nor any language employed in the narration but the simplest and plainest. A late-compiled story would have enlarged and spoken apologetically on the reasons for such a judgment, and would not have presented us with a bare recital of facts without comment.

1. *But a certain man*] It is not by way of contrast that the story of Ananias is put side by side with that of Barnabas, therefore much stress is not to be laid on the word *But*. Verse 36 of the last chapter begins, in the original, with the same conjunction, and it is often employed in narratives where only a simple connection

² wife, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part,
³ and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias,

of clauses is intended. Thus, Acts viii. 1—3, the same conjunction occurs four times over without any adversative sense.

named Ananias] The name was common. See Acts ix. 10—17, and xxiii. 2, xxiv. 1. It is the same as *Hananiah*, Jer. xxviii. 1; Dan. i. 6, 7, &c., where it is the Hebrew name of Shadrach, which is spelt *Ananias* in the "*Benedicite*," and that form of the name is found Tobit v. 12. It signifies "one to whom Jehovah has been gracious."

with Sapphira his wife] A name probably derived from the name of the precious stone *sapphire*, which word is found both in Hebrew and Greek.

sold a possession] The word may signify either lands, or buildings, or any kind of property. It is the word used of the young man who went away sorrowful from Jesus "for he had great possessions," Matt. xix. 22; Mark x. 22. The LXX. use it of vineyards (Hos. ii. 15).

². and kept back *part of the price*] i.e. while at the same time they professed to be bringing the whole sum into the common fund. The portion which was kept back was probably not large, for otherwise the general sense of the value of the land would have made it conspicuous. The word translated "kept back" is the same which is rendered Tit. ii. 10 *purloining*, and in classical Greek it has frequently the meaning *to rob*.

his wife also being privy to it] This is mentioned to shew that the offence was an aggravated one, and had not been committed without deliberation and set purpose. She was a willing accomplice in the intended fraud.

and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet] Thus professing equal devotion with all the others who were making sacrifices for the cause of the faith. We are not told what they hoped to gain by their act, whether in reputation among the people (ii. 47), or, by giving what was supposed to be their whole estate (which may be implied in the vague word *possession*), to procure for themselves in perpetuity a maintenance from the common funds. The former ambition was most probably what led to their offence. They thought more of the display made at the Apostles' feet than of the offence before God's eyes. And we know from St Peter's Epistle (2 Pet. ii. 3) that it was soon foretold that men would arise in the Christian community, who "through covetousness would with feigned words make merchandise of" the society, and at a later date (Jude 11), these men are described as those who run "greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." We may therefore be convinced that in the example of Ananias we have a typical instance of the kind of offence into which at this time the Christian community was in danger of being tempted.

³. *But Peter said, Ananias, why, &c.*] The interrogative particle is of a strengthened form in the original, and seems to indicate that

why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto

there had been a possibility of resisting the influence which led to this offence, had Ananias been desirous to do so. We must believe that the Holy Spirit gave Peter knowledge of the deception which Ananias was seeking to practise on the Church, and most likely also of the punishment which should come upon the offender. Otherwise we can hardly account for the calm manner of the Apostle when such a startling judgment was inflicted in an instant.

hath Satan filled thine heart] i.e. made thee bold enough. Cp. Esth. vii. 5, "that durst presume in his heart," and Eccles. viii. 11.

to lie to the Holy Ghost] for it was the power of the Holy Ghost that was manifested in the Apostles. It is much to be noticed how from the first the Apostles disclaim any power in themselves. It is Christ who works the miracles, the God of Abraham who gives the power of healing, and the Holy Ghost who is grieved by sins like that of Ananias. There is no trace of any seeking after consideration for themselves and their deeds among the records of these Acts of the Apostles, and no sign could be more indicative of the earliest age of the Christian Church. Before the apostolic age was past the internal character of the Church was much altered from this.

and to keep back part of the price of the land] As before, the sense is that of fraudulent concealment and purloining.

4. *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?*] The verb in the original is repeated. *Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own?* That is, there was no compulsion on him to sell it, the only thing expected from him being that, if he were moved to sell, he should honestly set forth what he had done. There seems to have been no necessity to give at all to the common fund unless a man felt that he could well afford to do so, nor to give all that he either had or realized by any sale, provided only he made honest declaration of what his gift really was. This is implied in the words which follow, which declare that the sum produced by any sale was at the seller's disposal until he made it over to the common fund.

why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?] The original is a translation of a Hebrew expression which is repeated several times in the prophet Haggai (i. 5, 7, ii. 18), and is rendered by the A. V. *Consider*. The force of the expression is "to lay anything (as a plan or a precept) deep in the heart," and it implies long and deep deliberation on the part of this offender. It was not a case of yielding to a sudden temptation, but the plan had been accepted into the heart, and fostered there till there seemed to be a way of carrying it out. Satan had filled his heart, but he had made no effort to cast out the intruder.

thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God] It is not intended to say that Ananias had *not* lied unto men at all, but that the gravity

5 God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and
gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that
6 heard these *things*. And the young *men* arose, wound him

of his offence was that he thought to deceive God. In *v.* 3 it is said that the deception had been practised towards the Holy Ghost, and so we learn hence the Divinity of the third Person of the Trinity.

5. *And Ananias hearing these words fell down*] Smitten through the power of that Spirit whom he had intended to deceive. Here is no description of a death from apoplexy or mental excitement under the rebuke of the Apostle, but a direct intervention of the Divine power.

Terrible as this Divine judgment was, we cannot wonder that it should be inflicted, for it was so done to check that kind of offence which brought in all the troubles of the early Church, and which though they be not so punished now, when Christ's Church has attained more firm hold on the world, yet would, if not terribly visited in these earlier days, have overthrown the whole work of the Apostles. Of a like character is the apparent severity of the penalty inflicted on Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, at the commencement of the Jewish priesthood (*Lev.* x. 2); and the way in which Aaron and his family are forbidden to mourn for those whom God so punished may teach us what interpretation to put upon the judgment inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira. For they were of the members of the infant Church; they had presumed to come nigh unto God and in a wrong spirit. On them, we may conclude, some gifts had been bestowed, and in this they differed from Simon Magus (*viii.* 20) and Elymas (*xiii.* 11), with whom they are sometimes compared, so that the words which God spake of Nadab and Abihu may be used of these offenders, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me." We see what evils the spirit of greed and hypocrisy wrought in the Corinthian Church, even to the profanation of the Lord's Supper (*1 Cor.* xi. 17—21): Every good institution would have been thus perverted and, as is said of some in later times (*Jude* 4), they would have "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness." The very community of goods which here was instituted for a time, was in this way perverted and turned into an argument for a community of all things, which resulted in the vices for which the Nicolaitans (*Rev.* ii. 6, 15) are so severely censured in the Scriptures. The death of Ananias and his wife is the finger of God interposed to save his Church from danger, just as He interposed to build it up by stretching forth His hand to heal, and that through the name of His Servant Jesus mighty works might be wrought by the first preachers.

and great fear came on all them that heard these things] In the best MSS. *these things* is omitted. Read "that heard it."

This fear would deter for a while all who were not thoroughly in earnest from making profession of Christianity, a profession which the favour that had been shewn towards the society (*iv.* 33) might have induced many to make who would have been rather a hindrance than a help to the cause.

6. *And the young men arose*] (*Lit.* the younger.) Some have sug-

up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*. And it was about 7 the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, 8 Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How 9 *is it* that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the

gested that these were persons connected with the Church whose business it was to take charge of funerals. But it seems unlikely that, at a time when assistance had not been provided to relieve the Apostles from "serving tables" and distributing the funds to those who needed (vi. 1—4), there should already have been an organization for this less pressing necessity. The Greek word used here is not the same as in v. 10, and this variation seems to shew that "the young men" were not in any official position, but were only the most able physically to perform such an office as is here described. On the way in which the Jews looked on attention to funeral rites see note on viii. 2.

wound him up] wrapped the dead body about with the robe which he was wearing at the time.

and carried him out, and buried him] We know from what took place after the Crucifixion that graves were made ready beforehand, and in the caves where the dead were deposited, as we can see from the account of the raising of Lazarus, there (John xi. 43) needed little preparation, and they were closed by the simple means of a stone placed at the cave's mouth. So that it would not need much time to complete the whole work of burial. In hot climates burial must needs follow quickly after death. Cp. the brief time which Jehu allowed to pass after Jezebel's death (2 Kings ix. 34) before he gave orders for her burial.

7. *the space of three hours after*] Time enough for the bestowal of the dead body, but yet so short that the news of what had befallen her husband had not reached Sapphira. It may have been that their home was in the country at a distance from Jerusalem, and that the husband alone came in to offer the money by reason of the distance.

came in] i.e. to the room where Peter and the rest of the congregation were assembled.

8. *And Peter answered unto her*] This use of the English verb *answer*, where no question has preceded and often where no remark has gone before, is not uncommon in the Bible (cp. 1 Kings xiii. 6; Dan. ii. 14, 15, 26; Luke iii. 16), but in the present verse what St Peter says is not an answer but a *question*.

Tell me] The Apostle's question might have made Sapphira suspect that their scheme was discovered, but she is as firm in her story as her husband had been.

whether ye sold the land for so much?] i.e. and no more. St Peter mentioned the sum which Ananias had brought in, or perhaps it was lying on the ground where he had put it at the first.

9. *ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord*] To try

Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these *things*.

whether the deception which you had planned would be found out; whether God's Spirit would make it known to us.

behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door] They were heard returning from the burial of Ananias.

and shall carry thee out] Better, *and they shall*, &c. thus making it clear that the verb refers to the bearers. St Peter, as before, was prompted by the Holy Ghost in what he said, and was enabled to predict the punishment of Sapphira for her persistent dissembling. We are not told that St Peter knew what would befall Ananias, but as the Spirit shewed him what was to come on the wife we may perhaps conclude that he knew what the fate of the husband would be also.

10. *Then fell she down straightway at his feet]* Close to the place where the money, for which they had sinned, had been laid, and where perhaps it was still lying. For we cannot think that St Peter would be willing to mix an offering given in such a hypocritical spirit with the more pure offerings of the other brethren. It may be that as he spoke, in v. 8, he pointed to the money still lying there unaccepted, "Did ye sell the land *for so much?*"

and yielded up the ghost] The verb is only used in the N. T. of the death of this husband and wife, and of the end of Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 23).

and the young men came in, and found her dead] They came to join the congregation again, for the worship appears not to have ceased during the time between the death of Ananias and the arrival of Sapphira. And this may be the explanation of the wife's ignorance of her husband's fate. None had gone forth but the younger men to bury the dead body.

and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband] Probably all that was required to be done was to roll a stone from some cave's mouth and place the body within.

11. *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things]* Lit. *upon the whole church and upon all that heard*, &c. To produce such a fear as should deter others from a like offence was God's intention in this miracle of punishment. And St Luke seems to have pointed to the reason by making here for the first time any mention of "the church" (see note on ii. 47). The true *ecclesia* must be free from such hypocritical professors, or its work could not advance. The lesson was to be stamped into the hearts of all who were fit to be of "the church," though at the same time it would strike deep into the minds of all others who learnt how the Spirit of God had

12—16. *Miraculous powers of the Apostles. Continued growth of the Church.*

And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and ¹² wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst ¹³ no *man* join himself to them: but the people magnified

punished the lying lips of those who sought the praise of men rather than that of God.

12—16. MIRACULOUS POWERS OF THE APOSTLES. CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.

12. *And by the hands of the apostles, &c.]* By the hands may here only be the Hebrew mode of expressing *by*. Cp. (Josh. xiv. 2) "By lot was their inheritance as the Lord commanded *by the hand* of Moses." But as in the description of our Lord's miracles we very often read "he laid *his hands* upon a few sick folk" (Mark vi. 5, &c.), and as it is said of the Apostles (Mark xvi. 18) "they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover," it seems better to understand the words here of such acts of imposition of hands, though we presently find (v. 15) that the multitudes believed that a cure could be wrought without such an act.

and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch] This must refer to such assemblies as were held by the Apostles for conference and instruction when they went up at the usual times of prayer. Thus *all* will signify the whole company assembled on some such occasions, and not embrace every person who had joined the new teaching. They came to Solomon's porch, both teachers and hearers, with one common purpose, to tell and know more of the religion of Jesus. But it is not necessary to interpret the sentence to signify that they took a regular possession of this cloister as their place for worship (see iii. 11).

13. *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them]* The sentence seems to convey an opposition to what has been stated in v. 12, and should begin with *But*. The sense intended is that the assemblies of Christians made the porch of Solomon their special rendezvous when they went up to the Temple, seeing that it was there that the first addresses in the Temple-precincts had been given by St Peter. And while they were so assembled none of the other people who had not yet joined the new community ventured to attach themselves intrusively to the Christian body. The verb *κολλᾶσθαι* is used of Philip (viii. 29) when he is commanded "Go near and *join thyself* to this chariot," where the action meant by it is one that was to press some notice of Philip upon the eunuch. From such intrusion all who were not Christians held back, and left the worshippers in Solomon's porch alone.

but the people magnified them] Render, *howbeit the people, &c.* This is necessary because we have taken *but* as the conjunction at the beginning of the verse. There are two different conjunctions in the original.

14 them. And believers were the more added to the Lord,
 15 multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that *they*
 brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on
 beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter
 16 passing by might overshadow some of them. There came
 also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusa-

Although the people (=the rest, who were not of the Church) held back from pressing themselves among the congregation, yet they greatly praised them for the words and works of which they heard and saw.

14. *And believers were the more added to the Lord*] In the Greek it is clearly seen that the words rendered *to the Lord* belong quite as closely to *believers* as to *were added*. "Persons believing in the Lord were added to His Church." The addition of this verse makes clear what has been said on v. 13, that the joining there mentioned was an intrusion into the congregation when they were assembled for public instruction. For the increase of the Church was not hindered in any degree. The Christians were held in reverent regard, and the faith which they preached gained multitudes of adherents.

15. *Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets*] Instead of the preposition *into*, the best authorities read *even...into*, "they even brought forth," &c.

These words are a description of one way in which the new believers gave evidence of their faith. To bring a sick person on a couch to the presence of Jesus was accepted by Him (Mark ii. 5) as a sign of true faith, and for the sake of the faith shewn by those who brought him the paralytic was made whole. So here, though we are not told of any cures wrought by the shadow of Peter, we may conclude that to the like faith God would give a like blessing.

and laid them on beds and couches] 'The warm climate making it possible for the sick to be exposed in the open air.

that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them] The order in the original is, *that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might, &c.* Peter is alone mentioned here because he was the most prominent figure, but we are not to conclude that no mighty works were done by the rest. These men who gave such an exhibition of faith have been described (v. 14) as *believers in the Lord*. There can therefore be no question as to what they regarded as the power which was to heal their sick. They did not believe on Peter, though they magnified him as the Lord's instrument; they did not ascribe healing power to Peter's shadow, though it might please God to make that a sacrament of healing, as to Israel in old times He had made the brazen serpent. They had seen health bestowed through the Apostle by the name of Christ, and to demonstrate their faith in that name, they bring their afflicted friends into the way of salvation.

16. *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem*] The best MSS. have no word for *unto*. The construction without that preposition would be *and there came also together the multi-*

lem, bringing sick *folks*, and *them which were* vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

17—32. *Arrest of the Twelve. Their miraculous deliverance and their Defence before the Sanhedrin.*

Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were 17

tude out of the cities round about Jerusalem. The use of the word *city* (πόλις) is common even when the places so called are very insignificant, as of Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23), Nain (Luke vii. 11), and Arimathæa (Luke xxiii. 51).

bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits] It was recognized that the power of the Apostles extended not only to physical, but also to spiritual maladies. Indeed the whole history being of a supernatural character, the cures wrought on ordinary maladies were of the nature of signs and wonders, and spake of a power which was not human. The power here displayed is that which in Christ's own life was confessed to be that of the Son of God (Luke iv. 40, 41).

The verb in the original for *vexed* is found only here and in Luke vi. 18 in the N. T., and like the word rendered "gave up the ghost" (vv. 5, 10), is used frequently in the works of Greek medical writers, so that it is such a word as we should expect to find a physician using in the description of this malady.

unclean spirits] are those which are called *wicked* in other parts of the New Testament (Matt. xii. 45, &c.), and the former epithet is probably applied to them because the sufferer in his state of frenzy wandered into places where he would incur ceremonial defilement, as the demoniac who had his dwelling among the tombs (Mark v. 3), the latter on account of the evil effects so often patent in the condition of the afflicted person, as loss of speech, hearing and other senses, the belief of the Jews being that spirits afflicted with such maladies were the cause of the like affliction in human beings.

and they were healed every one] For it was only a complete faith which had prompted the bringing them unto the Apostles, and to such faith *all things* had been promised by Christ (Mark ix. 23).

17—32. ARREST OF THE TWELVE. THEIR MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE AND THEIR DEFENCE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN.

17. *Then the high priest rose up]* The conjunction at the beginning of the sentence should be *But*. While the multitudes thronged to be healed, the effect on the authorities was to provoke them to opposition.

rose up] The Greek word is used in this chapter of the insurrections of Theudas and Judas (vv. 36, 37) and in the next chapter (vi. 9) of the disputants with Stephen. It is often found without the sense of opposition which it has here and in those verses.

and all they that were with him] A phrase more comprehensive than that used in iv. 6, "as many as were of the kindred of the high priest." The opposition has had time to gather its forces and now represents not only the family of Annas, but the heads of the party of the Sadducees.

with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were
 13 filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles,
 19 and put them in the common prison. But *the* angel of the

which is the sect] The word is that which St Paul uses in his defence (Acts xxiv. 14) before Felix, "after the way which they call *heresy*." But he employs it without any sense of blame (xxvi. 5) about the Pharisees, and it is used of them also xv. 5. With a bad sense it is applied to the Nazarenes (xxiv. 5), and similarly xxviii. 22.

of the Sadducees] From v. 21 it will be seen that the statement of Josephus concerning the influence of this sect is fully borne out (*Antiq.* XIII. 11. 6), for they had the rich on their side. We have no certain evidence in Scripture that Annas was a Sadducee, but Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 9. 1) tells us that his son Ananus [or Annas] was of this sect.

and were filled with indignation] The word used to express their feeling might better be rendered *jealousy*. What the historian is describing is an outbreak of party-feeling. The whole influence of the Sadducean party is called forth by their antagonism to the doctrine of the resurrection and their envy of the growth of the new movement.

18. *and laid their hands on the apostles*] The best MSS. omit *their*. The whole of the twelve are now seized, for the authorities are roused to activity. It is clear from this that, though St Luke has only mentioned the speeches of Peter, with some slight notice that John also was a speaker, yet all the Apostles were busy, and could have been quoted as preachers and teachers had it been any part of the compiler's purpose to write a history of all the Apostles.

and put them in the common prison] The noun is the same as in iv. 3, and the notion—that of *ward*, as a place of temporary imprisonment till the formal summoning of the council next day—should here be preserved. Read, *in public ward*. Such confinement was only precautionary and formed no part of the punishment intended by the Sadducees.

19. *But the angel of the Lord*] Better, *an angel by night opened the prison-doors*. As if for a protest against the actions of those who taught that "there was neither angel nor spirit." There is no possibility of explaining St Luke's words into anything but a miraculous deliverance. He gives no word that can be twisted into any other meaning. It was not an earthquake, it was not a friendly human being who interposed to procure the release of the Apostles. The writer readily acknowledges in this very chapter the intervention of Gamaliel and its effect, but he is here speaking of supernatural aid. If it be remarked that the Apostles make no mention of their miraculous deliverance when they are called upon for their defence, it may be answered that they in no case dwell on the miracles either wrought by or for them, except where they have been wrought under the eyes of men and are to be used as signs of the Divine power which was working in and for the Church. To enter on a description of a miracle which had been wrought as this deliverance had been, and to ground their claims to be heard upon circumstances of which the eyes of those to whom they

Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard ²⁰ *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them

spoke did not bear testimony, is foreign to the whole character of the Apostolic ministry.

20. *Go, stand and speak in the temple*] There is a conjunction in the Greek which is not here expressed. Render, *Go ye and stand and speak*.

There was to be no attempt made to conceal their escape. They were to go back to the same place where their most frequent teachings had been given before, and they were to continue the same teaching. They are not directed to appeal to the multitude for sympathy, nor to try and excite any feeling against those who had arrested them.

to the people all the words of this life] Here we have another of the words by which St Luke emphasizes in the most natural manner the point at issue between the Sadducees and the Apostles.

this life] i.e. this future life, the promise of which has received its first fulfilment in the resurrection of Jesus. This was the teaching which the Sadducees could not tolerate, but which in spite of opposition was to be persisted in.

21. *early in the morning*] The words indicate a time as soon as possible after day dawn. They lost no time in obeying the command. How early it was possible for them to come to the Temple we find from the directions in the Talmud concerning the morning sacrifice. It is said (Mishna *Foma* III. 1), "The Memunneh (see note on iv. 1) said to them: Go ye out (on to the Temple wall or roof) and see whether the time for killing the sacrifice has arrived. If it had arrived, the out-looker said, 'It has flashed forth' (i.e. day has dawned). Matthia ben Shemuel said [that the form of question was] 'Has the whole face of the east become lit up as far as to Hebron? And the man answered, Yes.' So that the first sacrifice took place at the very peep of day." A like explanation is found Mishna *Tamid* III. 2.

But the high priest came] i.e. into the council chamber, to consult on what should be done with the prisoners, of whose release they had as yet heard nothing.

called the council together] This was evidently deemed a case of the utmost consequence, and all pains are bestowed to gather to the hearing the combined wisdom of the whole authorities, for now, as is seen from Gamaliel's presence, not Sadducees alone were called. The word here rendered *council* means probably the smaller Sanhedrin.

and all the senate of the children of Israel] Senate is here used in its original sense = the older men, and is a literal rendering of the Greek *gerousia*, meaning the great Sanhedrin of 71 elders. The name indicates

22 brought. But when the officers came, and found them not
 23 in the prison, they returned, and told, saying, The prison
 truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers stand-
 ing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we
 24 found no *man* within. Now when the *high* priest and the
 captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these
 things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.
 25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men

that these were assessors added to the council by reason of their age and weight of character. We find from the Jewish literature that such assessors were often appointed. In the extract Mishna *Yoma* i. 1, quoted on iv. 6, the word for "assessors" is *parhedrin*, i.e. the Greek *πάρεδροι*, and the adoption of such a word into the Jewish vocabulary shews that the office was not Jewish in origin but had become so firmly grafted among them as to justify the adoption of a foreign expression to describe it.

22. *But when the officers came*] The name may imply a military body or it may have been only some of the Levitical guard who were sent. The same word is used (Luke iv. 20) of the "minister" of the synagogue.

23. *The prison truly found we shut*] The word rendered *truly* is omitted in the best MSS.

and the keepers standing without before the doors] The best MSS. read, *and the keepers standing at the doors*. Of course they were unconscious that their charge was no longer there.

24. *Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple*] The best MSS. have only *Now when the captain of the temple*. The word which in the A. V. is rendered *high priest* is simply = *priest*, but the like usage is common enough in Hebrew.

On the captain of the temple, see iv. 1; and on *chief priests*, iv. 23.

heard these things] Better, *these words*. It refers simply to the report which the officers had just brought back.

they doubted of them whereunto this would grow] i.e. they were at a loss about what was said, and did not know what step to take next. It is worthy of notice that when the Apostles are brought before them in the end, the magistrates avoid all questions about how they had been released. They clearly wished to have no more testimony to the supernatural powers which had been so often manifested in connection with Jesus and His followers. Caiaphas and his party could not be ignorant how Jesus Himself had risen out of His grave to the great terror of the Jewish guard set over it. With the opinions these authorities held, we can quite understand their perplexity and their silence on the subject, at all events before the disciples and the multitude.

25. *Then came one and told them*] Better, *And there came*, &c. The English *then* is often in such a position taken for an adverb of time.

The proceedings were evidently well known, and the hall of judgment was not far from where the Apostles were teaching at the very time.

whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that *you* should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and

are standing in the temple, and teaching the people] The order of the original should be preserved: *are in the temple standing*, &c., for the words look back to the command of the angel in v. 20. This *standing* implies the prominent and undaunted position which the Apostles had taken up. They were not like prisoners who had escaped, and so were seeking a place to hide themselves; but like men whose work had been interfered with, and who, as soon as they were able, had come back to it again.

26. *without violence*] Nor can we suppose that the Apostles were at all likely to offer resistance, for their examination before the council would afford them an opportunity of proclaiming the message of the Gospel.

lest they should have been stoned] We have already had evidence of the favour with which the disciples were looked upon by the people, and we can see from the account of the death of Stephen that the sudden outbreak of popular rage might result in the death of him against whom this feeling was displayed. And that the Jewish people were ready enough thus to take the law into their own hands, we can see from the Gospel history (John x. 31—33), and the parables of Jesus speak of such proceedings as though they were of no very rare occurrence (Matt. xxi. 35).

27. *And when they had brought them*] i.e. to the judgment hall.

28. *Did not we straitly command you*] The best authorities have here an affirmative sentence, *We straitly charged you*. The charge had been given only to Peter and John, but the council assume that it would have been by them conveyed to the rest of the twelve.

that you should not teach in this name] They go at once to that which is the great offence in their eyes. The name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they knew to have been crucified, but who was proclaimed to be alive again, and whose followers manifested such mighty works, was the object against which their power was directed.

and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine] A testimony from the mouth of enemies that the Apostles had laboured diligently and successfully to fulfil the first portion of Christ's command, that their preaching begin at Jerusalem.

and intend to bring this man's blood upon us] Better, *and ye wish to bring*, &c. It is a marvellous spectacle to see the judges take the place of culprits, and deprecate accusation where they would naturally be

the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey
 30 God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up
 31 Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God
 exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for
 32 to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And

dealing out penalties. But the invocation of the people before Christ's crucifixion, "His blood be upon us and upon our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25), was felt by the council to be likely to be brought to fulfilment.

29. *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said*] The Greek has no word for *other*. It is quite like the style of the New Testament to say "Peter and the apostles," and it is not implied hereby that Peter was excluded from the number of the Apostles, but, as he probably was the chief speaker, his name is singled out for prominence in the narrative (see note on iv. 6). Here again we have evidence that St Luke has made no attempt to do more than produce for us the substance of such speeches as he notices.

We ought to obey God rather than men] Better, *We must*, &c. In substance, though not in words, this is the argument used by Peter and John (iv. 19), though here more stress is laid upon the impossibility of doing otherwise than as they had begun.

30. *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus*] As Peter did in iii. 13, so here the Apostles point out that there is no severance of themselves from the worship of the Covenant God of Israel, but that they were teaching that His promise through Moses had now been fulfilled, for that in Jesus the promised prophet had appeared. Cp. Deut. xviii. 15, and St Peter's speech, Acts iii. 22.

whom ye slew and hanged on a tree] Better, *whom ye hanged on a tree and slew*. This sentence describes the Roman, and not the Jewish mode of execution. With the latter people only those who were already dead were to be hanged (Deut. xxi. 22; Josh. x. 26).

In the word which they use for *slew* the Apostles intimate that the guilt of the Crucifixion was as truly upon the Jews as if the act had been done by their hands, and not by those of the Roman soldiery.

The phrase *hanged on a tree* is used by St Peter again (x. 39), and by nobody else in the N.T. He also has a similar expression, *tree* for *cross* (1 Pet. ii. 24), "He bare our sins in his own body on the *tree*."

31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand*] The right hand is the symbol of might. Cf. Exod. xv. 6, and "His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory" (Ps. xcvi. 1).

to be a Prince and a Saviour] Mark how with the claim of sovereignty there is closely joined the promise of salvation. If Christ seeks to rule over men it is that He may save them.

for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins] Thus offering the way of salvation to all those who were ready to accept it. These words to a Jew would have great significance, for they had a saying (T. B. *Sanhedrin* 113 a) that salvation was one of the things which God

we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33—42. *Effect of the Apostles' defence. Counsel of Gamaliel. Release and subsequent conduct of the Twelve.*

When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*,³³ and took counsel to slay them. Then stood there up³⁴ one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doc-

kept in His own power. If Christ then was to bestow this gift on Israel He must be owned by them as God.

32. *And we are his witnesses of these things*] The best texts omit *his*, while some ancient authorities add *in him* in place of *his*.

these things] i. e. the Crucifixion and the Resurrection and Ascension.

and so is also the Holy Ghost] *Also* is not found in the best MSS. Christ had said, while alive, concerning the Holy Ghost, "He shall testify of me" (John xv. 26). 'This He did in the minds of the Apostles by "bringing all things to their remembrance," and enlightening them to see how Christ's life had fulfilled the prophecies, and also in the mighty powers which through the outpouring of the Spirit they now possessed.

whom God hath given to them that obey him] Thus the disciples declare that the obedience to God, which at the outset (v. 29) they had proclaimed as their bounden duty, was also the reason why the Holy Ghost had been bestowed upon them, and leaving it to be gathered that what God has done He will do again, and bestow His gifts of grace on those who are willing to obey Him.

33—42. EFFECT OF THE APOSTLES' DEFENCE. COUNSEL OF GAMALIEL. RELEASE AND SUBSEQUENT CONDUCT OF THE TWELVE.

33. *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart*] There is no Greek here for *to the heart*, but as in the only other place in the N. T. where this verb is found (Acts vii. 54) those words are added to it, it is best here to supply them to complete the sense, which is the same here as in that passage. The effect described is not the compunction which leads to penitence, but the annoyance that results in more furious anger.

and took counsel to slay them] The best texts read, *and wished to slay them*. So to get rid of the fear of one man's blood being brought upon them, they would take the lives of twelve more.

34. *Then stood there up one in the council*] Better, *But there stood up*, &c. See note on v. 25.

a Pharisee, named Gamaliel] It may very well be believed that some small sympathy towards the Christian teachers would be roused in the breast of a Pharisee, because they maintained, as he did, the doctrine of a resurrection, but there is nothing in the speech of this Pharisee beyond a policy of inactivity.

This Gamaliel, called here a doctor of the law, is no doubt the same

tor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and
 35 commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; and
 said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to your-
 36 selves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For

person who is mentioned (Acts xxii. 3) as the teacher of St Paul. He is known in Jewish writings as Gamaliel ha-Zaken (i.e. the older), and was the grandson of Hillel. He was alive during the time when Herod was beautifying the Temple. For in *Tosephta Shabbath* xiv. (ed. Lemberg) we read, "Rabbi Jose said, It happened that Rabbi Khalaphta went to Rabban Gamaliel (the younger, and grandson of the Gamaliel in our text) to Tiberias, and found him sitting at the table of Rabbi Jochanan ben-Nozâph, and in his (Gamaliel's) hand was the book of Job in Targum (i.e. in the Chaldee paraphrase), and he (Gamaliel) was reading in it. Rabbi Khalaphta said to him, I remember concerning Rabban Gamaliel the elder, the father of thy father, that he was sitting on a step in the Temple mount, and they brought before him the book of Job, in Targum, and he said to the builder, "Sink it (bury it) under this course of the wall." This could only have been when the walls were in building.

Gamaliel is said to have died 18 years before the Temple was destroyed.

In T. B. *Abodah Zarah* 11 a, in allusion to the custom of burning beds, clothes, and other things, at the funerals of great men (see Jer. xxxiv. 5), it is said, "When Rabban Gamaliel the elder died, Onkelos the proselyte burned in his honour the worth of 70 minæ of Tyrian money."

So great was Gamaliel's fame that we read (Mishna *Sotah* ix. 15) when he died "the glory of the Torah ceased, and purity and sanctity died out also." We can therefore understand that he was "had in reputation among all the people."

and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space] Instead of *the apostles*, the best authorities have *the men*. He wished them to be removed for a short time from the council room, that the conversation of himself and his colleagues might be the more unrestrained.

35. *Ye men of Israel*] It has been remarked upon the frequent occurrence of this and similar formulæ in the introduction of speeches in the Acts, that they are evidence that the speeches themselves are the composition of the writer of the book, and are only his own thoughts of the matter put into the mouths of the various speakers. After what has been said on the character of all the speeches, that they make no attempt to set before us all that was said on each occasion, but only the substance of what St Luke had received from eye and ear-witnesses, it can in no wise detract from the substantial veracity of all that is reported, if we find the compiler of the Acts, who was himself a Greek, giving the usual Greek form of introduction to the speeches of which he has shewn so often that he intends to supply only an outline.

take heed to yourselves] The phrase implies that thought is required before any action be taken. It is not, as the English words are sometimes taken to be, a warning against some danger which was impending.

before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be

36. *For before these days rose up Theudas*] Gamaliel proceeds to give illustrations that mere pretenders will come to naught. But about the mention of Theudas much discussion has been raised, because it is declared that the statements of Gamaliel contradict the facts recorded by Josephus, and therefore cannot be received as historic. In this way discredit would be thrown on all the rest of his speech.

It is true that Josephus mentions a Theudas (*Antiq.* xx. 5. 1) who rose up and professed himself a prophet, in the time when Fadus was procurator of Judæa, about A.D. 45 or 46, and persuaded a great part of the people to take their goods and follow him to the river Jordan, through which he promised he would afford them a miraculous passage. This man, who with many of his followers was destroyed, could clearly not be the leader of the revolt which took place before that raised by Judas of Galilee in the time of the taxing which took place some few years after our Lord was born. But when we turn to the history which Josephus gives of the events which preceded this rebellion of Judas we find him saying (*Antiq.* xvii. 10. 4), "At this time [i.e. in the days when Varus was president of Syria] there were *ten thousand* other disorders in Judæa, which were like tumults." Of these innumerable disturbances he gives account of no more than four, but presently in the same chapter says: "Judæa was full of robberies, and whenever the several companies of the rebels could light upon any one to head them, he was created a king immediately." Then in a brief space after (*Antiq.* xviii. 1. 1) Josephus proceeds to mention Judas of Galilee, though he calls him sometimes (*Antiq.* xviii. 1. 6; xx. 5. 2; *B. J.* ii. 8. 1, and 17. 8) a Galilean and sometimes a Gaulonite (xviii. 1. 1), and his rebellion in the days of the taxing. Now amid so many outbreaks, spoken of but not described, there is no violence in supposing that one may have been led by a Theudas, a name not very uncommon, and thus the order of events as stated by Gamaliel would be perfectly correct. The *great multitude* of the followers of the later Theudas indicates a far larger number than the *four hundred* of whom Gamaliel speaks. Moreover while Gamaliel's Theudas was killed and his followers dispersed, Josephus says that many of the adherents of his Theudas were slain, and many taken prisoners. There seems, therefore, more reason to identify this Theudas of whom mention is made by Gamaliel with some of the *ten thousand* rebels whom Josephus speaks of before the time of the census, than to suppose that Gamaliel, who is correct in his account of Judas, has mentioned in the other case a rebel who did not rise till long after the time of which he is speaking.

That such false leaders were numerous and had caused a terror in the minds of the more thoughtful among the Jews we can see from the Jewish literature which has come down to us. Thus (T. B. *Sanhedrin* 97 b) Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmani on the authority of Rabbi Jonathan, expounding Habakkuk ii. 3, says, "It means, may his spirit be blown away (perish) whosoever over-anxiously calculates about the ends. For people have said [in consequence of such calculations] when the end [so calculated] came, and he [Messiah] did not come, that he

somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

- 37 After this *man* rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of 39 men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot

would never come at all. Yet wait anxiously for him, for it says if he tarry wait anxiously for him." We have here the despairing echo of Gamaliel's words, "Let them alone."

boasting himself to be somebody] Literally, *saying that he was*, &c. Of course each one of these leaders professed himself to be the Messiah, for that was what the people in their distress were ever looking for.

37. *Judas of Galilee*] With this account agrees the history of Josephus (*Antiq.* XVIII. 1. 1), except that, as has been already noticed, he calls Judas a *Gaulonite*, but as when speaking of the same man again (xx. 5. 2) he calls him Judas of *Galilee*, and in the same sentence alludes to the history before narrated "as we have shewn in a foregoing book," we can have no hesitation in accepting Gamaliel's story as the correct one, while at the same time we may learn from this example what value we ought to place on the accuracy of Josephus when we have to weigh his statements against those of the New Testament.

in the days of the taxing] Not the same which is mentioned Luke ii. 2. That was rather an *enrolment* or census-taking preliminary to taxation. The revolt of Judas, about seven years later, was caused by the actual imposition of a tax. Josephus says of it (XVIII. 1. 1): "Cyprenius came into Judæa to take an account of their substance," and afterwards "Judas said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty."

drew away much people after him] The Greek word rendered *much* is wanting in the best MSS. Read, *drew away* [some of the] *people after him*.

he also perished] Josephus gives no notice of the fate of Judas and his party, though he mentions the revolt several times and says (*B.* 7. 11. 8. 1) that this "Judas was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own."

38. *it will come to nought*] As the verb is the same as that in the following verse it is better to render, *it will be overthrown*.

39. *but if it be of God*] The verb is not in the same mood as in the previous clause, and had the construction been in classical Greek, it might have indicated some opinion on Gamaliel's part of the truth of Christianity="If it is [as it is] of God." But in the N. T. the construction indicates no more than a simple conditional. Yet to mark the difference of phrase, read here, *But if it is of God*.

ye cannot overthrow it] The best authorities read, *ye will not be able to overthrow it*.

overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called⁴⁰ the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that *they* should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, re-⁴¹joicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house,⁴² they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

1—7. *Murmuring about the distribution of the common fund.
Measures for allaying it.*

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was 6

lest haply ye be found, &c.] The clause depends on, “Take heed to yourselves...” (v. 35).

40. *and when they had called the apostles]* i.e. back again to the judgment-hall.

and beaten them] As the guilty parties in the controversy (see Deut. xxv. 1—3).

41. *worthy to suffer shame]* The Apostles count as their glory what the world would count as shame, cp. Gal. vi. 14, “God forbid that I should *glory* save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This figure of speech (called oxymoron, and consisting in the effective contrast of words apparently opposite) is common in the New Testament. Cp. 2 Cor. vi. 8—10.

for his name] Read with the best authorities, *for the Name*. That name of which St Peter had said (iv. 12), “There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

42. *And daily in the temple, and in every house]* Read, as in ii. 46, *in the temple and at home*. These are their two fields of labour, in the Temple, while they may be there, and then in their own houses; and it may be that some would not be able to go to the Temple, yet these at home were teachers still.

Jesus Christ] Better, *Jesus the Christ*, i.e. the anointed, the Messiah. This is *the Name* of v. 41.

VI. 1—7. MURMURING ABOUT THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMON FUND. MEASURES FOR ALLAYING IT.

By the confession of the high-priest himself (Acts v. 28) Jerusalem was now filled with the teaching of the Christians, and thus the first step was accomplished in the course which Christ had ordained (i. 8) for the publication of the Gospel. Now, therefore, the historian of the Church's progress turns to deal with other events and different persons, because he has to tell of a persecution which caused Christian missionaries to go forth for the next stage of the work, the spread of the faith through Judæa and Samaria (viii. 1). The means which God employed for this end are not such as an inventor in the second century would have been

multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the

likely to hit upon, nor such as any writer who merely desired to magnify the Apostles would have adopted. A system for the more effectual relief of the widows among the congregation is devised, and an outburst of popular rage, causing the death of one of the dispensers of the relief-funds, also disperses the greater part of the Church of Jerusalem. A person who was free to choose (as an inventor would have been) would scarcely have selected one of the seven deacons for the first Christian martyr, and have left the Apostles out of sight, while giving the history of Stephen. The choice of such a writer would have surely fallen upon one of the twelve to be the first to die for the faith.

1. *And in those days*] Better, **these**. The narrative which follows is closely connected with v. 14, where it is said, "believers were added to the Lord, *multitudes* both of men and women."

when the number of the disciples was multiplied] Better, *was multiplying*. The participle is in the present tense, and its meaning should be fully expressed. It was at the time when this sudden increase was in progress that the difficulty arose which led to the murmuring. The numbers of the society increased so rapidly that the superintendence of the relief of the needy claimed the full devotion of the Apostles, and proved in the end more than they could discharge.

there arose a murmuring] By the readiness with which the Apostles took measures to remedy what was complained of, we may infer that there had been shewn sufficient cause for complaint. This may easily have come to pass without any fault on the part of the twelve, simply from the sudden growth of the number of Christians.

of the Grecians against the Hebrews] The first-named, who are called in the original *Hellenistæ*, were either Jews who had been born in countries where Greek was the vernacular, and so did not speak Hebrew, nor join in the Hebrew services of the Jews of the Holy Land, but had synagogues of their own in Jerusalem, or else they were proselytes. In either case they had embraced Christianity as Jews, for as yet the Gospel had been preached to Jews only. That provision was made for a Greek service for the foreign Jews, we may see from T. Jerus. *Sotah* VII. 1 (Gemara), "Rabbi Levi, the son of Hithah, went to Cæsarea, and heard the voice of the people saying the *Shema* (the name given to the Hebrew confession 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, Jehovah is one,' from its first word) in Hellenistic. He desired to prevent them. Rabbi Jose heard of it and was angry, and said, Thus I say, that whosoever does not know how to read it correctly in Hebrew shall not read it at all [in that language], but does his duty [by reading it] in any language which he knows how to speak."

the Hebrews] These were the born Jews who lived in the Holy Land and spoke the language which the New Testament calls Hebrew.

because their widows were neglected] The very persons who, speaking a foreign language and being desolate, would be likely to be overlooked amid the increased number of applications for help.

daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude² of the disciples unto *them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Where-³fore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest

in the daily ministration] The original word is the same as that which in xi. 29 is rendered *relief*, and from the class of persons on whose behalf the complaint was made it is clear that it bears the same sense here. This word *diakonia* has, however, caused the name of *deacons* to be attached to these officers, whose appointment was at first made that they might have care of and distribute the funds contributed by the rich members for the relief of the needy. We can nevertheless see from St Stephen's work that the labours of the seven were not confined to these duties alone, for he is a mighty preacher and endued with gifts of the Holy Ghost in the same way as the Apostles. It is deserving of notice that, before we find any special arrangements made for what we now understand by "divine service," the regulation of the relief of those in need had become so engrossing a part of the duty of the twelve as to have thrust aside in some degree the prayers and ministration of the word, which were especially their charge. In these early days they appear to have acted according to St James' teaching (i. 27), "Pure religion (*θρησκεία*) and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

2. *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them*] They found that there was cause for the complaint, and at once prepared to provide a remedy. By "the multitude of the disciples" we are not to suppose that an attempt was made to gather every one who in Jerusalem called himself a Christian, but that a large and special meeting was convened, before which the Apostles laid their plan. The funds had been given by various persons, and were for the common relief; it was therefore fit that a change in the distributors should be considered in common.

and said, It is not reason] The word properly means *pleasing*, and the idea meant to be conveyed is that it was not *meet* that the Apostles should leave the higher functions to which they had been specially appointed, and spend their whole time in the business duties to which the present emergency had given rise.

that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables] Better, "**for-sake** the word." The verb in the original is a strong form, and indicates that the whole time of the twelve was being spent on this disbursement.

By *tables* is meant the bench or counter at which the money was distributed. Both in Hebrew and Greek *bankers* are "tablers." Cf. "the *tables* of the moneychangers" (Matt. xxi. 12).

The word for *serve* is *diakonein*, akin to the noun in the previous verse.

3. *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you*] The word *wherefore* should according to the best MSS. be *but*, and the end of the sentence should be "*from among you.*"

report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and

seven men of honest report] Lit. *attested*, i.e. well reported of (as 1 Tim. v. 10). It is rendered "of good report" below (x. 22).

The number *seven* was no doubt fixed on because that was the number of persons chosen to manage public business in Jewish towns. See Mishna *Megillah* III. 1, "The men of the city who dispose of city market-places may buy with the price thereof a synagogue, or if they sell a synagogue, they may buy an ark (to keep the Law in), or if they sell an ark, they may buy wrappers (the ornamental and costly covers in which the Law was rolled) for the Law, and if they sell these wrappers they may buy books (i.e. the Prophets and the Hagiographa), and if they sell books they may buy a copy of the Torah, but if they have sold a Torah they may not buy books," and so on in the contrary order.

On this ordinance it is said, T. B. *Megillah* 26 a, "Raba says, This is only applicable when *the seven good men of the city* sell anything in the presence of the men of the city."

full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom] The best MSS. omit *holy*. Read, "full of the Spirit, &c." They were to be approved both by God and man. Men could judge of their wisdom, and God had in these days shed forth the Spirit on many.

whom we may appoint over this business] While leaving to the assembled brethren the selection of the men, the Apostles keep some control still with themselves. They certainly would judge best concerning the spiritual fitness of the chosen seven.

4. *But we will give ourselves continually*] The Greek word is used several times in describing the earnest conduct of the disciples. Thus (i. 14) "these all *continued* with one accord in prayer," and (ii. 42) "they *continued stedfastly* in the Apostles' doctrine." So ii. 46, and St Paul employs it (Rom. xii. 12), "*continuing instant* in prayer."

to prayer, and to the ministry of the word] Which explains what is meant by "leave the word of God" in v. 2. Here again we have the word *diakonia* to describe the Apostle's duty of preaching and teaching. Each office was, if duly performed, a part of the service which was laid upon the whole Church. Cp. Milton, Sonnet XIX. "They also serve who only stand and wait."

5. *And the saying pleased the whole multitude*] There was clearly no thought of neglecting any, and when the oversight was known and a remedy proposed all were rejoiced thereat.

and they chose Stephen, &c.] If we may conclude about the men who were chosen from the names they bear, every one of the seven was of the Grecians. The names are all Greek, and such a choice marks the desire of all the Church to put an end to every cause of complaint, and as it were to say, We know that as we should not wilfully overlook

Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch : whom they set before the apostles : and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. And the word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8—15. *Of Stephen's Preaching, Arrest and Accusation.*

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders

a Greek who was in need, so no Greek Christian would of purpose neglect a Hebrew widow, and to shew our trust we choose Greeks to have the whole oversight of this duty.

Of the men who were chosen, except Stephen, we hear in future only of Philip (viii. 5) as a preacher in Samaria, and he is supposed to be and probably is the same person as "Philip the evangelist" mentioned xxi. 8.

There is a tradition that Nicolas was the originator of that error of the Nicolaitanes against which St John speaks in such condemnatory terms in the Apocalypse (Rev. ii. 6, 15). But even in the early ages of the Church there was much uncertainty about this matter, and there is no trustworthy evidence for connecting this Nicolas with the licentious body whom St John condemns. (See Burton's *Eccl. Hist.* p. 364.)

Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch] Some have thought that, from this description of Nicolas, he was the only proselyte among the seven, but the distinction of such a special addition may have been given to him because he came from Antioch, while the other six were of Jerusalem.

6. *whom they set before the apostles*] That they might confirm, as they had proposed to do, the selection made by the whole congregation.

they laid their hands on them] As a solemn dedication of them to the work for which they had been chosen. Cf. Numb. xxvii. 18, 23.

7. *And the word of God increased*] i.e. was more widely spread now that the Apostles were freed from secular cares, and left to give themselves unto the ministry of the word. (Cp. for the expression xii. 24, xix. 20.)

a great company of the priests] To these men the sacrifice would be greater than to the ordinary Israelite, for they would experience the fullest weight of the hatred against the Christians, and would lose their status and support, as well as their friends. This is no doubt the reason why such special mention is made of them.

were obedient to the faith] As faith in Christ was the first demand made from those who desired to enter the new communion, it is easy to understand how the Christian religion gained from the earliest times the name of "the Faith." Cf. xiii. 8, xiv. 22, xvi. 5, xxiv. 24.

9, and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them

8—15. OF STEPHEN'S PREACHING, ARREST AND ACCUSATION.

8. *And Stephen, full of faith*] The best MSS. read *grace*. and *power*] i. e. of working miracles. He at least among the seven appears almost as largely gifted by the Holy Ghost, as were the twelve.

9. *Then there arose certain*] It is better to render the connecting particle *But*, it is no note of time.

of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines] Lit. *of them that were of the synagogue called, &c.* The number of synagogues in Jerusalem was very great. The *Libertines* were most likely the children of some Jews who had been carried captive to Rome by Pompey (B.C. 63), and had been made freedmen (*libertini*) by their captors, and after their return to Jerusalem had formed one congregation and used one synagogue specially. There is an interesting illustration of this severance of congregations among the Jews from a like cause in the description of the modern Jewish communities in Malabar and Cochin. It is in a MS. in the Cambridge University Library (Oo. i. 47) which was written in 1781. "At this time are found in their dwelling-places about forty white householders, and in all the other places are black Jews found, and their forefathers *were the slaves* of the white Jews, and now the black Jews as found in all the places are about five hundred householders, and they have ten synagogues while the white Jews have only one. And the white Jews dwell all together and their ritual is distinct from that of the black Jews, and they will not count them [the black Jews] among the ten [necessary for forming a congregation] except a few families of them; but if any of the white Jews go to their [the black Jews'] synagogues, they will admit him as one of the ten."

and Cyrenians] Read, *and of the Cyrenians*. On the Jews in Cyrene see ii. 10 note.

and Alexandrians] Read, *and of the Alexandrians*. There were in Christ's time, and had been long before, as we learn from the account of the Septuagint translation, Jews resident in Alexandria. In the Talmud we are told that they were very numerous. Thus T. B. *Succah* 51 b it is said, "Rabbi Jehudah said: He that hath not seen the amphitheatre at Alexandria (apparently used for the Jewish worship) in Egypt has not seen the glory of Israel. They say it was like a great Basilica with gallery above gallery. Sometimes there were in it double the number of those who went out from Egypt, and there were in it seventy-one seats of gold corresponding to the seventy-one members of the great Sanhedrin, each one of them worth not less than twenty-one myriads of talents of gold, and there was a platform of wood in the midst thereof, and the minister of the synagogue stood upon it with flags in his hand, and when the time [in the service] came that they should answer Amen, then he waved with the flag and all the people answered Amen." In spite of the exaggeration of the numbers in this story we may be certain from it that there was a very large Jewish population in Alexandria,

of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they ¹⁰ were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have ¹¹ heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the ¹² elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false wit- ¹³

and that they were likely to have a separate synagogue in Jerusalem. For another portion of this story see note on xviii. 3.

and of them of Cilicia] Cilicia was at the S.E. corner of Asia Minor. One of its principal towns was Tarsus, the birthplace of St Paul, and there were no doubt many other Jews there, descendants of those Jews whom Antiochus the Great introduced into Asia Minor (Joseph. *Antiq.* xii. 3. 4), two thousand families of whom he placed there as well disposed guardians of the country.

and of Asia] See note on ii. 9.

disputing with Stephen] The original word is used frequently of the captious questionings of the Pharisees (Mark viii. 11), and the scribes (Mark ix. 14), with Jesus and His disciples.

11. *Then they suborned men]* Suborn=to provide, but nearly always used in a bad sense. *Subornation* of perjury is the legal phrase for procuring a person who will take a false oath.

which said, &c.] The charge here laid against Stephen is afterwards defined. Blasphemous words against Moses and against God was the construction which these witnesses put upon language which had probably been uttered by Stephen in the same way as Christ had said (John iv. 21), "The time cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

12. *And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes]* of whom the latter two classes had already been exasperated against the Apostles. And now that it was told them that the glory of the Temple was spoken against, the common people would be readily roused, for the Temple was the object of great admiration and pride, as we can see from the words of Christ's disciples (Matt. xxiv. 1).

and came upon him] As the scribes and Pharisees upon Jesus in the Temple (Luke xx. 1).

and caught him, and brought him to the council] A fit prelude to their still more violent proceedings after Stephen's defence was ended (vii. 57).

13. *and set up false witnesses which said]* Their falseness consists in the perverted turn which they gave to the words of Stephen. Though we have no words of his hitherto recorded, we can see from the character of his defence in the next chapter that he must have been heard to declare that the worship of God was no longer to be restricted as it had been to the Temple at Jerusalem. And just as in the accusation of Christ (Matt. xxvi. 61) the witnesses (called, as here, false, and for a like reason) perverted a saying of Jesus, "Destroy this temple and in three

nesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

1—53. *Stephen's Defence.*

7 Then said the high priest, Are these *things* so? And he

2 days I will raise it up," which St John (ii. 21) explains, into "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days," so the words of Stephen which spake of a worship now "to be bound to no fixed spot, and fettered by no inflexible externality" (Zeller), were twisted into blasphemy against the Temple and the law, called in v. 11 blasphemy against Moses and against God; and by the use of these two phrases as equivalent the one to the other, they shew us how God and Moses meant for them no more than their Temple and its ritual.

This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words] The best authorities omit *blasphemous*.

14. *for we have heard him say]* No doubt there was some handle afforded by Stephen's words for their statement.

that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place] What the tenor of Stephen's language must have been may be gathered from vii. 48, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And to Jewish people at this time to sever worship from Jerusalem was the same thing as to destroy the Temple. The attempt which has been made to shew that the charge against Stephen is merely a reproduction of that made against Jesus is seen to be futile when we observe that in Stephen's case the witnesses know nothing of "the raising up again of the temple," and that Stephen himself, by not contradicting but explaining their accusation, in his defence points out that their statement had a widely different origin from that which gave cause to the accusation of Jesus.

15. *And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him]* As they would naturally in expectation of what he was about to say in his defence.

saw his face as it had been the face of an angel] Either because of the calm dignity which Stephen's natural look displayed; he was calm and undisturbed, confident in his good cause and supported by the Spirit: or as his gaze soon afterwards (vii. 56) beheld the open heavens and the glory of Christ enthroned on high, it may be that the sense in this verse is also supernatural, and that the face of Stephen was already illumined with the radiancy of the new Jerusalem.

For the expression cp. vii. 20 note.

VII. 1—53. STEPHEN'S DEFENCE.

1. *Then said the high priest, Are these things so?]* Read, *And the*

said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; 'The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get ³

high priest said, &c. Thus he called upon Stephen to answer the charges laid against him.

2. *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken*] Omit *men*. Cp. i. 16, note. For an account of the argument in Stephen's speech and its connection with the whole design of the writer of the Acts, see *Introduction* pp. ix. x.

The God of glory] A not very common expression (see Ps. xxix. 3), but probably chosen designedly as an introduction to this discourse, which deals with the several stages of God's manifestation of Himself. The term is applied (John i. 14) to the incarnate Word; "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia] The ancestral home of Abraham is called "Ur of the Chaldees" (Gen. xi. 31), and it is said (Josh. xxiv. 2, 3) to have been "on the other side of the flood," i.e. beyond the Euphrates. It is not possible to determine the site of Ur, but the most probable opinion seems to be that which places it at Edessa, now called *Orfah*, and said to have been called *Orrha* in early times. If this were the place the journey thence to Charran (O. T. Haran), i.e. *Carrhæ*, would not have been so very formidable for the father of the patriarch to undertake, and at Charran Terah remained till he died (Gen. xi. 32). Abraham when without his father could remove with greater ease to the distant Canaan.

our father Abraham] If Stephen were merely a proselyte he might yet use this expression, for Abraham is regarded as the father of proselytes. On Genesis xii. 5, "The souls which they had gotten [Heb. *made*] in Haran," the Targum of Onkelos explains "The souls which they (Abraham and his family) had brought to serve the Law," i.e. made them proselytes: and on the same text *Berashith Rabbah*, par. 39, has "Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Zimra, said: If all the men in the world were to combine to create even a single gnat, they could not infuse into it a soul; and thou sayest, 'The souls which they *made*.' But these are the proselytes whom they brought in. Yet, if so, why does it say they *made* them? This is to teach thee that when anybody brings near the stranger, and makes him a proselyte, it is as good as if he had created him."

before he dwelt in Charran] The Greek verb rendered dwelt is one which implies a settled residence, though it conveys no idea of permanent abode. It is used (Matt. ii. 23) of Joseph and Mary *dwelling* at Nazareth, and (Matt. iv. 13) of Christ's less fixed *dwelling* in Capernaum.

3. *and said unto him*] It does not appear from the narrative in Genesis whether there had been some Divine communication which caused the first removal from Ur to Haran. We are only told (xi. 31) that Terah took his family and removed, but as it is there added "to go into the land of Canaan," and as in the following chapter, where God's order to remove is expressly given (xii. 1), it is also said that "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan," we may conclude that the first re-

thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and
 4 come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then
 came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in
 Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he
 5 removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And
 he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to

removal had been enjoined by God, and that it was only on account of Terah's age that the country for which they set forth was not reached at once. In Gen. xv. 7 God says "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees," language which implies a command given for the first removal. Cp. Neh. ix. 7. Gen. xii. 1 should be rendered "Now the Lord *said* unto Abram," not "had said," as A.V.

Get thee out of thy country [land], and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee] The word for *land* is the same in both clauses. In Gen. xii. 1 the words "and from thy father's house" are added after "kindred." The destination of the emigrants was known before they started from Ur.

4. *Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran]* The Chaldeans were the people of that country which had Babylon for its capital. The extent of the country signified by "the land of the Chaldeans" must have varied at different periods.

when his father was dead] According to the order of the narrative in Genesis, this seems to be so, but when the ages of Terah and Abraham are noticed, it appears that Abraham left Haran before his father's death. For Terah was 70 years old when Abraham was born (Gen. xi. 26), and Abraham was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran (Gen. xii. 4), so that of Terah's 205 years there were yet $(205 - 145) = 60$ years unexpired when his son went away. On this Jewish literature has the explanation (*Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis, cap. 39) that God absolved Abraham from the care of his father, and yet, that Abraham's departure from Terah should not lead others to claim the same relaxation of a commandment for themselves, Terah's death is noticed in Holy Writ before Abraham's departure, and it is also added, to explain the mention of *death*, that "the wicked (and among them Terah is reckoned, see Josh. xxiv. 2) are called dead while they are alive."

he removed him] i.e. God caused him to migrate. There is a slight vagueness in the English, but none in the Greek.

5. *And he gave him none inheritance in it]* The first settlement of Abraham in Canaan is said (Gen. xii. 6) to have been at the place of Sichem [Shechem] at the plain [rather, *oak*] of Moreh. He next dwelt on the east of Bethel, and in both these places he probably purchased land, for he built an altar at each; and on returning from Egypt (xiii. 3) he came "to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai," which he hardly could have done unless the land had been his own, for he "was very rich in cattle."

no, not so much as to set his foot on] For the land, when God gave it, would be held in very different manner from that in which Abraham held the land which he had bought or hired.

set his foot on: yet he promised that *he* would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child. And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of cir-

yet he promised] Better, *and* he promised. The conjunction is the ordinary copulative.

that he would give it to him for a possession] More literally, *in possession*. The promise "unto thy seed will I give this land" was first made (Gen. xii. 7) when Abraham was at the place of Shechem, and in its greater fulness when he returned from Egypt (xiii. 15, 16).

when as yet he had no child] We cannot learn from Holy Writ how long a time Abraham lived after the promise before Isaac was born, but we can see that it was a long period, for when he went down to Egypt Sarah was a fair woman in the prime of her beauty (Gen. xii. 14), and she was "waxed old" (xviii. 12) before her son was born.

6. *And God spake on this wise*] The words are substantially those which we find in Gen. xv. 13, 14.

four hundred years] This number agrees with the number stated in Genesis; but in Exod. xii. 40, and also by St Paul (Gal. iii. 17), the time is said to have been *four hundred and thirty* years. The period is reckoned so as to include part of the lives of the patriarchs in Canaan, and the variation may be accounted for if one number dates back to the first call, and the second only to the departure from Haran; or the one may be reckoned from the time of the covenant of circumcision, and the other from the promise of the land. Or it may be that one is merely a round number and the other an attempt at greater exactness. We can come to no certain conclusion in the matter, but we can see that both numbers were current among the Jews, for Josephus (*Ant.* 11. 15. 2) makes the time 430 years, and elsewhere (*Ant.* 11. 9. 1, and *Bell. Jud.* v. 9. 4) 400 years.

7. *after that shall they come forth*] The first prophecy (Gen. xv. 14) of this Exodus adds "with great substance."

and serve me in this place] These words are not in the promise given to Abraham, but are taken from Exod. iii. 12, where the original promise is repeated and sent to the Israelites through Moses, and the place meant in that verse is Sinai, called there Horeb, the mountain of God. Stephen in his speech combines the two that he may describe the promise in its fulness, and he mentions the worship of God in that place, because the one great object of his address is to demonstrate that what is laid to his charge concerning the highest worship of God being no longer restricted to the Temple and Jerusalem, is nothing more than they were taught by a study of their own history.

cumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and

8. *the covenant of circumcision*] Given the year before Isaac was born (Gen. xvii. 21).

9. *the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph*] The same word is used (xvii. 5) of the hostile feelings of the Jews at Thessalonica against Paul and Silas. In the history (Gen. xxxvii. 4, 5) it is said "his brethren hated him," and (xxxvii. 11) "they envied him."

sold Joseph into Egypt] See Gen. xxxvii. 28 for the way in which this was done.

but God was with him] Read, *and* God, &c. The conjunction is *καί*. The statement is from Gen. xxxix. 2, 21, 23, and is used by Stephen here to give point to his argument that God's presence is not circumscribed, and so neither should His worship be tied to place.

10. For the history see Genesis xxxix.—xli.

11. *Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, &c.*] The oldest MSS. omit "the land of."

our fathers found no sustenance] The noun in Greek is generally used of food for cattle rather than men. See LXX. Gen. xxiv. 25, 32, &c. But we must suppose that, though in the history the sufferings of the people are most noticed, the famine also affected the supplies of cattle-food, and the one word is used to embrace all.

12. *he sent out our fathers first*] i.e. before he himself went away from Canaan into Egypt.

13. *was made known*] The original is not the same in the two clauses for this expression. Read in the latter "Joseph's kindred became known," &c.

14. *threescore and fifteen souls*] This number is taken from the LXX. In the Hebrew (Gen. xli. 8—27) the number is but seventy including Jacob himself. The five additional names given in the LXX. are Machir the son and Galaad the grandson of Manasseh, and the two sons of Ephraim, Taam and Soutalaam, with Soutalaam's son, Edom. So in Exodus i. 5 the Hebrew has 70, and the LXX. 75. There were many traditions current on this subject, and the Rabbis notice too that

fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, ¹⁵ he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and ¹⁶

69 persons (they exclude Jacob) are reckoned for 70 in the account given Gen. xlv. In the *Midrash Shemuel*, c. 32, there are various suggestions thrown out. First it is said the one wanting was Jochebed, who became wife of Amram and mother of Moses, for it is mentioned (Numb. xxvi. 59) that she was a daughter of Levi born in Egypt, and the tradition is that she was born "between the walls," i.e. just as the people were entering Egypt, and so she is to be counted in the number. Another tradition is attached to Gen. xlv. 23, "The sons of Dan, Hushim." As the last word is a plural form, and *sons* are spoken of in the verse, therefore it is thought that there were two Hushim, an elder and a younger. Also (T. B. *Baba Bathra* 123 a *ad fin.*) there is mentioned the tradition that there was a twin with Dinah. We may thus see that there were traditions current which probably were well known to the translators of the LXX., and gave rise to their number. They however are not consistent, for in Deuteronomy (x. 22) they give 70 as the number which went down into Egypt. Stephen, as was to be expected from the other quotations in this book, and also because he was a Grecian Jew, follows the LXX.

15. *So Jacob went down into Egypt*] Now the whole race whom God had chosen to Himself was in Egypt, away from the land of promise, and remained there for a long period, yet God was with them in their exile, and His worship was preserved for the whole time. This seems the point which Stephen desires to emphasize by so frequent a repetition of the words "into Egypt."

and died, he, and our fathers] Better, *and he died, himself, and our fathers*. Of the transportation of the bodies of the patriarchs to Canaan we have no record in Holy Writ. Josephus (*Antiq.* II. 8. 2) says "the posterity and sons of these men, after some time, carried their bodies and buried them at Hebron." In the discussion of Exodus xiii. 19, *Carry up my bones away hence with you*, it is said (*Mechilta*, ed. Weiss, 1865, Vienna, 8vo p. 30) that the bodies of the patriarchs were carried out of Egypt with the returning Israelites, and it is argued that this is implied in the expression *with you*, which Moses quotes as uttered by Joseph, who must have known that his brethren to whom he was speaking would all be dead before the Exodus. Therefore *with you* could only be used if their bodies were to be transported as well as his own.

16. *and were carried over into Sychem, &c.*] This Sychem is the Old Test. *Shechem*. The oldest authorities give for the latter part of the verse "*of the sons of Emmor in Shechem.*"

The statement in this verse appears incapable of being reconciled with the record of the Old Testament. There we find (Gen. xlix. 30) that Abraham bought the field and cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre (i.e. Hebron), from Ephron the Hittite. This is there spoken of as the general burial-place of the family; there were buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob's wife Leah. And of Jacob we read (Gen. xxxiii. 19), "he bought a parcel of a field where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father."

laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of
 17 money of the sons of Emmor the *father* of Sychem. But
 when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had
 sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in
 18 Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.
 19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated

We are not told that this was for a burial-place, and it is rather to be judged that it was not so, because it is added "he erected there an altar." Moreover it is in Machpelah that Jacob desires to be buried (Gen. xlvii. 30, xlix. 30) and is buried (l. 13). We have seen (note on v. 5) that "the place of Shechem" was one of the resting-places of Abraham when he came first into Canaan, and that probably he bought a possession there, for he built an altar. The bones of Joseph were laid in Shechem (Josh. xxiv. 32). There were two burial-places connected with the patriarchal families. In the report of Stephen's speech we find that Abraham is said to have bought what Jacob really purchased, but that may also have been land purchased by Abraham "in the place of Shechem." We have only to suppose that in his speech Stephen, speaking of the burial of the whole family, mentioned, in accordance with the tradition of Josephus, the burial of the fathers in Hebron, which Abraham bought, and noticed the laying of Joseph's bones at Shechem which Jacob bought, and that into the report of what he said a confusion has been introduced by the insertion of Abraham's name for Jacob's in the abbreviated narrative. We have pointed out in several places that the speeches recorded can be no more than abstracts of what was said, and the degree of inaccuracy here apparent might readily be imported in the formation of such an abstract, and yet the original speech have correctly reported all the traditions.

Stephen dwells on "Shechem" in the same way as before he had dwelt on "Egypt," to mark that in the ancient days other places were held in reverence by the chosen people, and they served God there, though at the time when he was speaking Shechem was the home of their enemies the Samaritans.

17. *But when [as] the time of the promise drew nigh* i.e. for its fulfilment. The fathers "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Heb. xi. 13).

which God had sworn, &c.] The oldest authorities give *had vouchsafed* (ὡμολόγησεν). The same word is used (Matt. xiv. 7) of the promise made by Herod to the daughter of Herodias.

the people grew and multiplied in Egypt God blessed them there. (See Exod. i. 7, 12.) The number of those who came out of Egypt (Exod. xii. 37) was "six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children."

18. *till another king arose, which knew not Joseph* The oldest authorities have, *till there arose another king over Egypt, &c.*

19. *The same dealt subtilly with our kindred [race]* The word is from the LXX. (Exod. i. 10), "Let us deal wisely (i.e. craftily) with them" are the words of the new king.

our fathers, so that *they* cast out their young children, to the end *they* might not live. In which time Moses was born, ²⁰ and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's ²¹ daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, ²² and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was ²³ full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his

and evil entreated our fathers] Beside the hard tasks put upon the people according to the record in Exodus, Josephus adds (*Antiq.* II. 9. 1) that the Egyptians "made them to cut a great many channels for the river, and set them to build pyramids, forced them to learn all sorts of mechanical arts and to accustom themselves to hard labour."

so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live] Better, *in causing their young children to be cast out, &c.* The words are rather a description of what the Egyptian king did in his tyranny (Exod. i. 22), than (as A. V.) of what the Israelites were driven to by their despair.

20. *In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair]* The last phrase is literally "fair unto (i. e. in the sight of) God." This is a Hebrew mode of expressing a high degree of any quality. Thus (Jonah iii. 3) "Nineveh was an exceeding great city," is "a city great unto God." Similar instances are found, Gen. x. 9, xxiii. 6, xxx. 8, &c. In the *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, c. 48, we have "The parents of Moses saw his face as [that of] an angel of God."

and [he was] nourished up in his father's house three months] Modern English would omit *up* in this sentence.

21. *nourished him for her own son]* Jewish tradition says that the king had no son, and so Moses was designed by the king's daughter to succeed to the kingdom. Josephus (*Antiq.* II. 9. 7), where she speaks of him as "a child of a divine form and generous mind."

22. *And Moses was learned [instructed] in all the wisdom of the Egyptians]* As was to be expected if he were designed for the kingdom. The wisdom on which the Jewish traditions most dwell is the power of magic, and such knowledge as Pharaoh's wise men are represented as having in the book of Exodus.

and was mighty in [his] words and in deeds] The same traditions tell of Moses as a great captain among the Egyptians, and as leading them to victory against the Ethiopians (Josephus, II. 10. 2).

23. *And when he was full forty years old]* Better, *But when he was well-nigh forty years old.* The verb in the original intimates that the forty years were just being completed. For the fixing of this time we have no authority in the Old Testament. We learn thence that Moses was eighty years old when he was sent to speak before Pharaoh for the deliverance of the Israelites (Exod. vii. 7), and that he was a hundred and twenty years old when he died (Deut. xxxiv. 7). In *Midrash Tanchuma* on Exodus ii. 6, we are told "Moses was in the

24 brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one *of them*
 suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was
 25 oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his
 brethren would have understood how that God by his hand
 26 would deliver them: but they understood not. And the
 next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and
 would have set them at one *again*, saying, Sirs, ye are bre-
 27 thren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did
 his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made
 28 thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as
 29 thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at
 this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where

palace of Pharaoh twenty years, but some say *forty* years, and forty years in Midian, and forty years in the wilderness." Stephen's words agree with this tradition.

it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel] The verb in the original, which is here rendered *visit*, is the same as in Luke vii. 16, "God hath visited his people," and means to look upon (generally with kindness, James i. 27), and this was the old sense of the English *visit*. Cf. Shaks. *Rich. II.* i. 3. 275:

"All places that the eye of heaven *visits*."

24. *and smote the Egyptian*] i. e. killed him. See Exod. ii. 12.

25. *for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them*] Better, *and he supposed that his brethren understood how that God by his hand was giving them deliverance*. There is no condition in the sentence. The traditions, in the atmosphere of which Stephen moved, represent the death of the Egyptian as no mere ordinary killing by superior strength, but as brought about by mysterious Divine power, which Moses feeling within himself expected his kindred to recognize.

26. *And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove*] i. e. to "two men of the Hebrews" (Exod. ii. 13). This quotation from Exodus is but a forcible way of representing what up to this point had been left unexplained, that the persons contending in this second case were Israelites.

28. *Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?*] For *didst* read *killedst*. The verb is repeated in the original.

29. *Then [And] fled Moses at this saying*] Josephus (*Antiq.* ii. 11. 1) makes no mention of this reason for the flight of Moses, but says that the Egyptians were jealous of him, and told the king "that he would raise a sedition, and bring innovations" into the land. In consequence of the plots against him because of these suspicions Moses fled away secretly.

and was a stranger in the land of Madian] Lit. "and became a sojourner," &c. Madian is the Greek form for *Midian*, which for

he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, ³⁰ there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When ³¹ Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him, *saying*, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, ³² and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the ³³ Lord to him, Put off *thy* shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have ³⁴ seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This ³⁵ Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him

clearness' sake would be better here. By "the land of Midian," which is only found in Scripture history, is probably meant the peninsula on which Mount Sinai stands (see Exod. iii. 1).

where he begat two sons] Gershom and Eliezer; their mother was Zipporah the daughter of Jethro (Exod. xviii. 2—4).

30. *And when forty years were expired*] Thus making, with the forty years mentioned in v. 23, eighty years, the age at which Moses went unto Pharaoh (Exod. vii. 7).

there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord] It is better to conform the New Testament orthography in familiar names to that of the Old, and so write *Sinai*. The oldest authorities omit the words "of the Lord."

31—34. Here we have in substance the history as given in Exodus iii. 2—10.

32. *the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*] The oldest authorities omit "the God" in the second and third places.

34. *I have seen, I have seen*] The Greek is an attempt to imitate an emphatic Hebrew construction, and is literally "having seen, I have seen," which in idiomatic English="I have surely seen," by which words the Hebrew is rendered (Exod. iii. 7).

35. Stephen here begins to point out how in old time the people had rejected Moses, though he had the witness of God that his commission was Divine, that he may shew his hearers how they are acting in the same manner toward Jesus.

This Moses...the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel] The best MSS. read, *him hath God sent...with the hand, &c.* The verb is in the perfect tense in the original, and constitutes the form of Stephen's appeal to history. God, says he, hath

³⁶ in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red
³⁷ sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is *that* Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he,
³⁸ that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers:

sent back the rejected Moses to be a ruler and deliverer, and he leaves them to draw the conclusion that what God had done in the case of Moses, he would also do in the case of the prophet whom Moses had foretold as to be like himself. Cp. Gal. iv. 23; 1 Tim. ii. 14; Heb. vii. 6.

by the hand of the angel] i. e. with the power. Cp. Acts xi. 21, "The hand of the Lord was with them." And of the angel it is said (Exod. iii. 4) "When *the Lord* saw that he turned aside to see, *God* called unto him," so that the whole expression means, "with the power of God, who appeared to him," &c.

36. *He brought [led] them out*] Having God's power with him in all these wanderings.

after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt] The oldest MSS. omit "the land of." Read, *having wrought wonders and signs in Egypt*.

and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years] The Jewish traditions make the plagues sent on the Egyptians at the Red Sea more than those which had been sent to them in Egypt. Thus in the *Mechilta* (ed. Weiss, p. 41) the Egyptians are said to have received *ten* plagues in Egypt, but *fifty* at the Red Sea, because the magicians speak of the afflictions in Egypt (Exod. viii. 19) as "the *finger* of God," while at the Red Sea it is said (Exod. xiv. 31) "And Israel saw that great work [Heb. *hand*] which the Lord did upon the Egyptians."

37. The prophecy is in Deut. xviii. 15, and has been already quoted by St Peter (iii. 22) as referring ultimately to the Messiah. Its quotation to those who had rejected Jesus is the key-note of what is more openly expressed in v. 51, "as your fathers did, so do ye."

38. *This is he, that was in the church [congregation] in the wilderness*] i. e. with the congregation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai.

with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina [Sinai]] As in v. 35, the angel is God Himself; just so in v. 31 the voice which spake is called "a voice of the Lord."

and with our fathers] Jewish tradition says that the whole world was present at Sinai. Thus *Midrash Rabbah* on Exodus, cap. 28 *ad fin.*: "Whatever the prophets were to utter in prophecy in every generation they received from Mount Sinai," and presently after, commenting on the words of Moses (Deut. xxix. 15), *Him that is not here with us this day*, it is said, "These are the souls which were yet to be created," i. e. to be sent into the world; and to explain (Deut. v. 22) *and he added no*

who received *the* lively oracles to give unto us: to whom³⁹ our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from *them*, and in their hearts turned *back again* into Egypt, saying unto⁴⁰ Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a⁴¹ calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God⁴² turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven;

more, (on which they found the teaching that all revelation was completely given at Sinai,) they say, "The one voice was divided into seven voices, and these were divided into the seventy tongues," which Jewish tradition held to be the number of the languages of the world.

who received the lively oracles to give unto us] *Who* (i. e. Moses) *received living oracles*, &c. Moses is thus shewn to have been a mediator (see Gal. iii. 19), and thus to have prefigured the mediator of a better covenant (Heb. viii. 6) and of the New Testament (Heb. ix. 15), even Jesus (Heb. xii. 24).

The oracles are called *living*, just as "the word of God" is called *living* [A. V. quick] (Heb. iv. 12), because it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. On this effect cp. St Paul's language concerning the law (Rom. vii. 9), "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." But there is at the same time the other sense in the word, which appears when (John vi. 51) Christ calls Himself "the *living* bread which came down from heaven." For the law pointed onward to Christ, who should lead His people "unto *living* fountains of waters" (Rev. vii. 17). For the thought, cp. 1 Pet. i. 23, "The word of God which *liveth* and abideth for ever."

39. *to whom our fathers would not obey* [be obedient], *but thrust him from them*] For they said (Numb. xiv. 4), "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." This was after the return of the spies, when the people became discontented with the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt] As is told, Exod. xvi. 3, Numb. xi. 4, 5, in which passages the desires of the people are all represented as turned to the good things which they had enjoyed in the land of their slavery.

40. *saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us*] Lit. *which shall go before us*. The passage is almost word for word the report given in Exod. xxxii. 1.

41. *and rejoiced*] It was not the voice of them that shout for the mastery, nor of them that cry for being overcome, but the *noise of them that sing* which Moses (Exod. xxxii. 18) heard when he came down from the mount.

42. *Then God turned*] Read, **But**. Cp. Josh. xxiv. 20, "If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods, then he will *turn* and do you hurt."

as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness?

⁴³ Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made

and gave them up to worship [serve] *the host of heaven*] God had previously warned them against this kind of idolatry (Deut. iv. 19), but we learn from the records of their historians (2 Kings xvii. 16) and their prophets (Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5) that the warning was given in vain.

as it is written in the book of the prophets] The Hebrews divided their Scriptures into three sections, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (called the Psalms, Luke xxiv. 44), and each of these parts is looked upon as a special and separate book. The Law comprised the five books of Moses. The earlier prophets were the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings: the later prophets were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve which we now call Minor Prophets. The Hagiographa consisted of the following books in the order here given: Psalms (and the expression of Luke xxiv. 44 will be understood because the Psalms stand first in this section), Proverbs, Job, the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther (these five last mentioned were called the five rolls, being written on separate rolls for use at special festival and fast services), Daniel, Ezra (Nehemiah), and Chronicles.

O ye house of Israel, have ye offered, &c.] It is more emphatic to keep the order of the Greek. Read, *Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?* The whole passage to the end of v. 43 is a quotation from Amos (v. 25—27). The question in this verse is to be answered in the negative, for in their hearts, though they were sacrificing to Jehovah, they had turned back into Egypt, and such service God counts as no service at all.

⁴³. *Yea, ye took up, &c.*] Read, *And ye took up*. The conjunction is the ordinary copulative, and the thought is continuous, "Your hearts were after your idols, and ye took up their images," more truly than my ark. In the Hebrew the word for "took up" is that regularly employed for the "bearing" the ark of the covenant.

the tabernacle of Moloch] The Hebrew word which the LXX. have rendered *tabernacle* is not the usual form for that word. There is little doubt that it is intended for a proper name, *Siccuth*.

and the star of your god Remphan [Rephan, the] *figures which ye made to worship them*] This clause differs widely from the Hebrew, which gives, "And Chiun your images, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves." The LXX. seem to have read the words in a different order. *Rephan*, which is by them substituted for *Chiun*, is said to be the Egyptian name for Saturn (see Spencer, *de Leg. Heb.* p. 667), and may have been used by them as an equivalent for the other name which is found nowhere else but in Amos. The whole idea of the passage seems to be that the stars were being worshipped, and so it is an illustration

to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of Witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that *he* should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God

sued for Stephen's argument. "To worship them" is an addition not in the LXX.

and I will carry you away beyond Babylon] The Hebrew of Amos and the LXX. say beyond *Damascus*. But as Babylon was the place most connected in the mind of the Jew with captivity, the alteration in the quotation may be due either to the prominence of such connection in Stephen's mind, or in the thoughts of the reporter of the speech, who thus inadvertently wrote Babylon. At this point Stephen closes the digression which began at the 37th verse, and which is meant to point out that the Jews are doing towards Jesus just what their fathers did to Moses and against God. He now resumes the argument that God's worship was not meant to be always fixed to one place.

44. *Our fathers had the tabernacle of Witness [of the testimony] in the wilderness*] The name is found first Exod. xxxviii. 21. The ark is also called the *ark of the testimony*, as Exod. xxv. 22, &c., and the name was no doubt given because all the contents of the ark, which was the most sacred part of the Tabernacle fittings, were testimonies to God's rule or to His power exerted for His people. Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, and the tables of the Law were all stored up therein. And this ark above which God made His presence seen was in the wilderness and moving from place to place.

as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, &c.] Better, *even as he had appointed who spake, &c.* For the command see Exod. xxv. 9, 40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8.

45. *Which also our fathers that came after*] Better, *having received it after*. For all the generation that came out of Egypt was dead at the entry into Canaan except Caleb and Joshua.

brought in with Jesus [i. e. *Joshua*] It is better here and in Heb. iv. 8 to let the Greek orthography give place to the form of the word used in the Old Testament.

into the possession of the Gentiles] The preposition is not *into* but *in*, and the noun does not mean the land possessed by the nations, but the act of the Israelites in taking possession of it for themselves. Read, *when they took possession of the nations*, (lit. *in their taking possession*,) *whom God drove [thrust] out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David*. Till this time the Tabernacle existed, and as the history tells was not always in one place in the land of Canaan, and at the time when the first proposal for a permanent Temple is made by David (2 Sam. vii. 2) and approved by Nathan, God forbids the building of it by David. All which goes to strengthen Stephen's argument that the worship should not be fettered to one place.

drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of
 46 David; who found favour before God, and desired to find
 47 a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built
 48 him a house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in
 49 temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven
 is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house
 will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the
 50 place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all
 these *things*?

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye
 do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do*

46. *to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob*] referring to Ps. cxxxii. 5, "Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." A reading which is largely accepted gives, "for the *house* of Jacob," but in spite of the ancient authority for it, it is so unsuitable to the drift of the argument, that it seems better to conclude that it is an error of the earliest scribes, rather than to accept it in the text.

48. *Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet*] The oldest authorities omit *temples*. We must supply some English word to complete the sense; perhaps *houses*. Stephen allows that in the days of Solomon there seemed to be a more permanent abode appointed for God's worship, but instantly points out that God through His prophet (Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2) had taught that He was not controlled by or confined to any place.

49. *Heaven is my throne, &c.*] The quotation is nearly verbatim from the LXX.

51. *Ye stiffnecked*] A charge often brought against the Jews in the Old Testament, cp. Exod. xxxii. 9, xxxiii. 3, &c., so that it is a very suitable expression when Stephen is declaring that the people of his time were "as their fathers."

and uncircumcised in heart and ears] As the rite of circumcision was the sign of submission to the Jewish religion in its fullest requirements, so the word *uncircumcised* became a synonym for obstinate resistance to what God had revealed, and the phrase in the text consequently signifies "ye who shut your heart and ears against the truth." For this metaphorical application cp. Lev. xxvi. 41; Deut. x. 16; Jer. vi. 10.

It seems very likely that at this part of his discourse Stephen saw that the language he had been using was distasteful to his audience, and therefore he applied to them words which implied how far they were from being God's people though they called themselves Israelites. They were in his eyes as those whom they called "sinners of the Gentiles." (Gal. ii. 15.)

ye do always resist the Holy Ghost] From the days of Moses, whom their fathers would not obey, down to the days of Jesus, whom they had crucified.

ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? ⁵² and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the ⁵³ disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

VII. 54—VIII. 1. *Effect of the Speech. Death of Stephen.*

When they heard these *things*, they were cut to the heart, ⁵⁴ and they gnashed on him *with their teeth*. But he, being ⁵⁵

52. *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?*] Better, *did not your fathers persecute?* Cp. the history, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, "They mocked the messengers of God and despised his words and misused his prophets." And Christ (Matt. xxiii. 37) brought the same charge against Jerusalem, "thou that killest the prophets."

the Just One] The same epithet is applied to Jesus by St John (1 John ii. 1), and is found so used in the Acts (iii. 14, xxii. 14).

of whom ye have been [become, even] *now the betrayers*] Thus proving yourselves true children of those who misused the prophets.

53. *who have received*] Better, *ye who received* the Law from Sinai, *by the disposition of angels*] Better, *at the ministration of angels*. St Paul (Gal. iii. 19) has the same expression concerning the Law, that it was "ministered by angels." The LXX. have in Deut. xxxiii. 2, speaking of the giving of the Law, "On his right hand were angels," and Josephus (*Antiq.* xv. 5. 3) represents the same tradition, "We have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines and the most holy part of our Law by angels." So *Pesikta Rabbathi*, par. 21, "There came down with the Holy One to Sinai twenty-two thousand ministering angels like the camp of the Levites."

and have not kept it] Read, *and kept it not*. Stephen here points back along the whole history of the Jews, and shews how the Law, which was intended to lead men to Christ, had not been guarded in its best sense, the spirit having been sacrificed to the letter, and so the result had been that they rejected and slew Him of whom the whole Law was speaking. The Law, given by angels, was the glory of Israel, the perverse use of it had turned to their shame and destruction.

VII. 54—VIII. 1. EFFECT OF THE SPEECH. DEATH OF STEPHEN.

54. *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart*] There is a conjunction in the original which is not expressed in the English. Read, *Now when*, &c. On the last verb, which is only found here and in v. 33, see note there. It expresses the sort of cutting that would be made by a saw, and its effect is always one of irritation, and at last it came to be synonymous with gnashing the teeth for rage, with which expression it is here combined.

and they gnashed on him with their teeth] More literally, *gnashed their teeth at him*.

full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right
 56 hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.
 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their
 58 ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down

55. *saw the glory of God*] Some visible sign of God's presence such as the Shechinah had been to the Jews of old. See Exod. xvi. 10, xxiv. 17, in the latter of which passages it is described as like devouring fire. It is defined by the Jews as the concentration of God's omnipresence.

and Jesus standing on the right hand of God] i.e. he was permitted to behold Jesus triumphing in the flesh in which He had been crucified. The position of *standing* rather than that of *sitting* as described elsewhere (Matt. xxvi. 64, &c.) may have been to indicate the readiness of Jesus to strengthen and help His martyr.

56. *the Son of man*] This title, which in the Gospels is only used by Christ when speaking of Himself, is here first employed by another, and can fitly be so employed now, for the prophecy which Christ uttered of Himself (Matt. xxvi. 64), "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power," is now fulfilled, and its fulfilment is to be preached to the world.

57. *Then they cried out*] Better, But, &c.

and stopped their ears] Thus shewing that they merited the description given in v. 51. The verb signifies, to compress, to hold tight together. On the action thus described cp. T. B. *Kethuboth* 5 b, "Wherefore is the whole ear hard but the flap soft? That if any hear an unbecoming word he may *press up* the flap and shut his ear."

and ran [rushed] *upon him with one accord*] As though he were one convicted of idolatry, in which case (Deut. xiii. 9, 10) "the hand of *all the people*" was to be upon the offender.

58. *and cast him out of the city, and stoned him*] In accordance with the Law (Lev. xxiv. 14) the person to be stoned must be carried without the camp, and to the people of Jerusalem the walls of the city were as the limits of the camp. Though there was much popular excitement exhibited in this proceeding, we are not to think that it was looked upon by those who were actors in it as other than the carrying out of the Law.

There was a place set apart for such punishment. The person to be stoned was placed on an elevation twice the height of a man, from whence with his hands bound he was thrown down, and then a stone as much as two men could carry was rolled down upon him by the witnesses, after which all the people present cast stones upon him.

and the witnesses laid down their clothes] i.e. their loose outer garments, that they might be more ready for the task which they had to discharge. The law which ordained that the first stone should be

their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, ⁵⁹ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and ⁶⁰ cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And 8 Saul was consenting unto his death.

thrown by the witnesses was meant to restrain hasty accusation. Men would only bring an accusation for grave reasons when they knew that their own hand must be first upon the condemned person.

at a young man's feet] Saul was already of such an age that the authorities could entrust him (ix. 2) with the duty of going to Damascus to arrest the Christians in that city. The Greek word is applied to persons up to the age of forty. In the Epistle to Philemon (9) St Paul speaks of himself as *aged*. That Epistle was probably written about A. D. 63, and the death of Stephen took place about A. D. 35, therefore Saul may well have been between 30 and 40 years of age.

whose name was Saul] Lit. *called Saul*. The name is the same as that of the first King of Israel, and signifies "one asked for" (i. e. in prayer). This Saul was also of the tribe of Benjamin, and had come from his home at Tarsus in Cilicia to attend on the lessons of the great teacher Gamaliel (Phil. iii. 5, 6; Acts xxii. 3).

59. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God*] The last word is supplied to make the sense clear in English, but from the words which follow it is better to read "the Lord" instead of "God," for it is the Lord Jesus who is invoked.

and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit] i. e. at its departure from my body; which he knew was soon to take place.

60. *And he kneeled down*] in prayer, probably before the stoning had commenced.

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge] i. e. Reckon it not against them. The original word is the same as in Rom. x. 3, "going about to *establish* their own righteousness," as it were to shew a reckoning in their favour. It is to be observed that both the prayers of Stephen are addressed to Jesus as God. The tone of both cannot but bring to the memory the words of Jesus addressed to the Father in His agony, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46), and "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). As Christ had died, so did His servant learn to die.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep] The last verb is the same which is used (Matt. xxvii. 52) of "the saints which slept" and arose at the crucifixion of Jesus.

VIII. 1. *And Saul was consenting unto his death*] i. e. approving of all that was done. We have the same word, Luke xi. 48, "Ye allow (i. e. praise and approve of) the deeds of your fathers." St Paul says of himself (Acts xxii. 20), "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed I also was standing by and consenting unto his death."

I—4. *Persecution after Stephen's Death.*

And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and ² Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

VIII. 1—4. PERSECUTION AFTER STEPHEN'S DEATH.

1. *And at that time there was a great persecution*] Better, *And there arose on that day, &c.* The persecution was in immediate succession to the death of Stephen. Having once proceeded to such a length, the rage of the people turned upon the whole Christian body.

against the church which was at Jerusalem] i.e. the congregation which had grown up since the day of Pentecost.

and they were all scattered abroad] Thus the rage of their enemies brought about the dispersion which Christ had foretold (Acts i. 8). By the word *all* we need not understand every member of the Christian body, but only those who had been most active and so were in special danger from the persecution. We find (v. 3) that there were many left, both men and women, in the city, whom Saul seized upon as "disciples of the Lord" and carried to prison. Perhaps Ananias who visited Paul at Damascus (ix. 19, 25) may have been among those now scattered abroad, but see ix. 2 note.

throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria] According to the order of extension indicated by Jesus. The teaching of the Apostles must have been with great power to break through the long-standing prejudices of their Jewish converts against the Samaritans.

except the apostles] Jerusalem would of necessity be looked upon as the headquarters of the Christian band. Thither all the wanderers would refer for guidance and help. The twelve therefore must remain at their post, in spite of all the persecution.

2. *And devout men carried Stephen to his burial*] On *devout*, see ii. 5 note.

The verb often means "to prepare a dead body for burial," but in Thuc. vi. 72 it is found exactly as used here.

The Jews paid great attention to funeral rites. Cp. *Midrash Rabbah* on Gen. xlvii. 29 (par. 96), "Deal kindly and truly with me," literally, "Do with me kindness and truth." Is there then a kindness of falsehood, that he says, kindness and truth? How is this? There is a common proverb which says, "Is the son of thy friend dead?" Put on the load (i.e. bear the burden with him). Is thy friend himself dead? Put off the load (his survivors will not requite you for your sympathy). Therefore he says to him, "If thou wilt do me a kindness after my death, that is a kindness of truth." And in all Ashkenazic prayer-books it is said: "These are the works of which a man reaps the interest in this world, and the capital endures in the world to come; the honouring of father and mother, the doing of acts of mercy, ... *the bearing forth*

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into ³ every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went ⁴ every where preaching the word.

5—13. *Philip's Preaching in Samaria and its effects.*

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and ⁵ preached Christ unto them. And the people with one ⁶

the dead, the reconciliation of a man to his neighbour, but the study of the Torah is above them all." Cp. Mishna *Peah* i. 1 for a part of this.

and made great lamentation over him] The word expresses the beating on the breast which is one of the outward expressions of great sorrow. The Hebrew word for mourning (Gen. xxiii. 2; 2 Sam. iii. 31, &c.) has the same sense. It must have needed no little courage at such a time to perform the funeral rites for one who had fallen as Stephen had, by the fury of the whole people.

3. *As for [But] Saul, he made havock of the church*] His own words will best describe his action (xxii. 4), "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." The same word is used by the LXX. (Ps. lxxx. 13) of the ravages of wild beasts.

entering into every house] i. e. making his search everywhere that none should escape.

and haling men and women] i. e. dragging them forth. We have the word still in the form "to haul," and the *halyards* of a ship.

committed them to prison] Because the number of arrests made it impossible that they should all be brought to trial at once.

4. *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where* [went about] *preaching the word*] In these words we have the general effect of the persecution. One particular history of such preaching is given immediately.

5—13. PHILIP'S PREACHING IN SAMARIA AND ITS EFFECTS.

5. *Then [And] Philip*] The second named in the list of the seven deacons (vi. 5). He is only mentioned in this chapter and xxi. 8 where he is called Philip the Evangelist.

went down to the city of Samaria] i. e. the capital city of the district of Samaria. It was at this time called *Sebaste*=Augusta, in honour of Augustus Cæsar (Joseph. *Antiq.* xv. 8. 5).

and preached [proclaimed] Christ unto them] Better, *the Christ*. His preaching was that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The verb is not the same as that rendered "preaching" in the previous verse, but is used (Matt. iii. 1, iv. 17) of the commencement of John the Baptist's preaching, and of Christ's. In like manner, Philip goes forth uttering his voice in the new fields of labour.

6. *And the people* [multitudes] *with one accord gave heed*] The original words imply that crowds of the people gave their faith and consent to the new teaching.

accord gave heed unto those *things* which Philip spake,
 7 hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean
 spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were
 possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and *that*
 8 *were* lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that
 9 city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which
 beforetime in the *same* city used sorcery, and bewitched
 the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some

hearing and seeing the miracles which he did] Better, *when they heard and saw the signs which he wrought*. They heard what had been done in other places and saw what was done each under his own observation. The miracles are described by that characteristic which they were specially intended to have in this instance. They were to be *signs* that the message which Philip was bringing was from God. The signs here enumerated are such as could leave no doubt in the minds of those who witnessed the cures.

7. *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them*] There are some variations in the Gk. Text of this clause, but the most authoritative text would give; *For from many of them which had unclean spirits they came out crying with a loud voice*. On unclean spirits cp. v. 16 note.

9. *a certain man, called Simon*] From the Gk. word *magos*=sorcerer or magician, this man is usually spoken of as Simon Magus. According to Justin Martyr (*Apol.* i. 26) he was born at Gitton, a village of Samaria. The history which is given of him after the events mentioned in this chapter describes him as persistently hostile to St Peter and as following that Apostle to Rome to oppose his teaching. But much that is related is of very doubtful authority. He is said to have been deified at Rome, but it seems probable that Justin mistook a tablet, which was discovered in the sixteenth century with an inscription "*Semoni Sanco deo fidio*" which was erected in honour of the Sabine Hercules, for a record of Divine honours paid to this Simon Magus.

which beforetime in the same city used sorcery] There is no word for "same" in the original. The sorcery which Simon, and men like him, used was probably no more than a greater knowledge of some of the facts of chemistry by which they at first attracted attention and then traded on the credulity of those who came to consult them. From the time of their sojourn in Egypt the Jews had known of such impostors, and in their traditional literature some of the "wisdom" of Moses partakes of this character.

and bewitched [amazed] the people of Samaria] The same verb is used (v. 13) of the feeling produced in Simon himself by the sight of Philip's miracles, and is there rendered "wondered."

giving out that himself was some great one] The general expectation that some great person was to arise among the Jews dictated the form in which impostors would proclaim themselves and aided them in procuring credence for what they said.

great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to ¹⁰ the greatest, saying, This *man* is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time *he* ¹¹ had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed ¹² Philip preaching the *things* concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and ¹³

10. *This man is the great power of God*] The A. V. translates the *Tex. Rec.*, but the best MSS. give, *This man is the power of God that is called great*. We can see from the language of the N. T. that "powers" was a word current to express *angelic or heavenly influences* (Rom. viii. 38; 1 Pet. iii. 22); and without assuming such a partition of the celestial host as is seen in the later Alexandrine writings we can understand the thought of these Samaritans that in Simon they had an incarnation of Divine power, which deserved the title of great preeminently.

11. *And to him they had regard*] Read, *And they gave heed to him*. This is an instance of that fondness for change of expression which is so marked a feature of the A. V. The word in the original is exactly the same as in the preceding verse.

of long time he had bewitched [amazed] *them with sorceries*] His birthplace was in Samaria, and it is most probable that he had lived there a great part of his life. Tradition (*Clement. Hom. II. 22*) makes him to have been educated in Alexandria, but he is also said to have been a pupil of Dositheus a Gnostic teacher in Samaria, so that he had probably been but a short time away from his native country.

12. *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God*] The oldest MSS. omit *the things*. The verb "preaching" is the same as in v. 4, and contains the notion of "gospel" or "glad tidings." Now that the field of the preachers' labour is being extended we have a further definition of the character of the message which they carried everywhere. "The kingdom of God" was the subject of Christ's converse with the disciples during the forty days after His resurrection (i. 3).

and the name of Jesus Christ] i.e. that He was the Messiah of whom there was knowledge and perhaps some expectation among the Samaritans (John iv. 25, 42). The question of the woman of Samaria "Is not this the Christ?" was answered by Philip's preaching.

13. *Then [And] Simon himself believed also*] We can see from the history which follows that the belief here described was of a very imperfect nature. It perhaps amounted to no more than the conviction that in Philip was some power greater than his own. We have an example of a like imperfect belief described in like words in St John's Gospel (viii. 31), "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him," and all that follows in the chapter shews that the belief which they professed was not enough to prevent them from plotting for Christ's death.

when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding *the* miracles and signs *which were* done.

14—25. *Peter and John sent down to Samaria. Conduct of Simon Magus.*

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto
15 them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered [was amazed] St Luke's words imply that Simon was only wonder-struck at the sight of the works wrought by Philip, just as his own works had made the Samaritans to wonder.

beholding the miracles and signs which were done] Better, *beholding the signs and great miracles wrought*. There is apparently a distinction intended by St Luke between the belief of the Samaritans and that of Simon. When they believed, it was the preaching and the glad tidings to which they most gave heed, but the verb used in this verse seems to paint Simon as one who gazed with wonder only on a sight which was beyond him to explain.

14—25. PETER AND JOHN SENT DOWN TO SAMARIA. CONDUCT OF SIMON MAGUS.

14. *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem*] The whole twelve still abiding there (v. 1) and evidently all taking their part in the administration of the affairs of the Church, though it does not fall within St Luke's purpose to notice what each did or said.

heard that Samaria had received the word of God] There was a communication kept up between the fugitives from Jerusalem and the twelve even from the first. Samaria here means the district, for although Philip's preaching was in one city, the newly-baptized would spread abroad in every part, and carry the teaching forth as the woman of Samaria did her "new learning" (John iv. 28). They had received the word of God as their countrymen before, so as "to know that this is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world."

they sent unto them Peter and John] We gather from this passage that there was no special preeminence assigned to any among the twelve in these earliest days. Peter and John were sent forth on their mission by the decision of the whole body. These two were probably chosen for such a work, as they had taken the most active part and in concert (iii. 1) in establishing the Church in Jerusalem.

15. *who, when they were come down, &c.*] It is clear from the whole history that the special gift of the Holy Ghost, bestowed at this period on the Christian converts in various places, was not given except through the Apostles. The case of Ananias, sent by God's special command to Saul, differs from all others. Peter could promise it (ii. 38) to those who should repent and be baptized, but the Samaritan

(for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they¹⁶ were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then¹⁷ laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on¹⁸ of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on¹⁹ whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee,²⁰ because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be pur-

converts whom Philip had made received no share of such powers till the arrival of Peter and John. But the Apostles make it manifest by their prayer that the gift was not theirs either to impart or withhold, but was "of God," as Peter calls it (v. 20).

16. *they were baptized in [into] the name, &c.*] The preposition, which is the same that is used by Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19) at the institution of the Sacrament, implies the tie by which the new converts are in baptism bound to Christ as His followers, servants, worshippers.

17. *Then laid they their hands on them*] That there might be some outward sign of this imparted grace. So Ananias (ix. 17) laid his hands on Saul, and he received the Holy Ghost. But on Cornelius and his companions (x. 44) the same gift was bestowed while Peter spake unto them.

18. *And when Simon saw, &c.*] Simon's conduct now makes it clear how limited his faith had been. As he offered to buy the power, so we may be sure he meant to sell it. His faith, such as it was, had only sprung from his amazement.

he offered them money] From his name, all trafficking in sacred things has since been called *Simony*.

19. *saying, Give me also this power*] The character of the man is shewn by what he asks for. He does not desire the Holy Ghost for himself as a spiritual gift to seal his baptism, but that he may be able to bestow, what he looks upon as a higher power than his own magic, upon others. We can learn from this narrative that the gift of the Holy Ghost had been made apparent by the new powers conferred on those who received it. Their works and words Simon had seen and heard, and hence his application to the Apostles.

20. *But Peter said unto him, Thy money [silver] perish with thee*] It is clear from what follows that this terrible invocation of doom upon this offender is to be qualified by the condition supplied from v. 22, where repentance and prayer are pointed out as means whereby even so great a sinner may find forgiveness. And St Peter may have thus joined Simon in the same destruction as his money, because he foresaw that there was little or no hope that such a man could be brought to repentance unless the consequence of his sin were set before him in all its terror.

because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money] Better, *because thou thoughtest to purchase, &c.* Simon had

- ²¹ chased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this
²² matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.
²³ For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in*
²⁴ the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said,

given no heed to the prayer of the Apostles that the gift of the Spirit should be sent down. He thought not of it as a "gift of God," but by the language which St Peter here employs of him, he considered that if it could be once secured by him it would be his own at all times and for ever.

21. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter (or word)*] By the word "lot" the thought is carried back to the election of Matthias (i. 26). In that case the choice had been left to the "Lord who knows the hearts of all men," but Simon's character is patent to all; "his heart was not right with God." If the literal rendering, "in this word," be adopted, the reference is to v. 14, where it is said, "Samaria had received the word of God."

22. *Repent therefore, &c.*] On this condition not only could the stern wish of Peter be averted, but the anger of God also. We see therefore that the words of the Apostle in v. 20 must have been coupled in his mind with such condition, but the further language of this verse seems to imply that to Peter's mind there was not much hope of such repentance.

and pray God] The oldest MSS. read "the Lord," and this is what was to be expected, for the offence was specially against Christ. Simon, with corrupt motives, was seeking to be enrolled among those who were called by Christ's name.

if perhaps the thought of thine heart may [shall] be forgiven thee] The word rendered "thought" is found in the N. T. only here, and gives the idea of a matured plan. The Apostle sees how full the mind of Simon has been of the scheme which he has conceived, and the knowledge of this seems expressed in the "if perhaps" with which this clause begins. He will not declare that there is not hope even for such an offender, but the covetousness, which is idolatry, makes repentance almost impossible.

23. *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*] The preposition *in* makes a great difficulty in this verse. The word in the original means *into* or *for*. The construction has been compared with that of the Hebrew preposition ל = *for* after the verb "to be" in passages such as Ezek. xxxvii. 22, "I will make them one nation," literally, "*unto* one nation." But instances of this construction are not common enough in the O. T. for an imitation of it in the N. T. to be probable. It seems better therefore not to take "gall of bitterness" and "bond of iniquity" as thus in apposition with the subject of the sentence, but rather to regard the preposition as used with the sense of motion towards a place or state and subsequent rest there.

Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of *these things* which ye have spoken come upon me. And they, when they ²⁵ had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26—40. *Philip baptizes an Ethiopian Eunuch.*

And *the* angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, ²⁶ Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth

So it is found in Luke xi. 7, "My children are with me in (*eis*) bed," where the meaning is "They have come into and are remaining in bed." For the expression "gall of bitterness," cp. Deut. xxix. 18, where those who serve false gods are spoken of as "a root that beareth gall and wormwood." See also the "root of bitterness," Heb. xii. 15. The second expression is found as "bands of wickedness" (Isa. lviii. 6). The whole sentence would thus imply that Simon had gone from one evil to another till he had reached and was remaining in a stage which deserved the reprobation spoken against idolatry in the O.T., and had allowed evil to make him its prisoner.

24. *that none of these [the] things which ye have spoken come upon me*] Simon shews by the character of his petition that he is not moved by a true spirit of repentance. He utters no word of sorrow for the evil of his thought, but only petitions that he may suffer no punishment. Yet we can see that he had not taken the expression of St Peter in v. 20 as a curse invoked upon him by the Apostle, but only as a declaration of the anger of God, and of the certainty of a penalty upon wilful continuance in such sin. His entreaty may be compared with that oft-repeated petition of Pharaoh to Moses (Exod. viii. 8, 28, ix. 28, x. 17) "Intreat the Lord for me," extorted by fear and followed by no change of conduct.

25. *And they [They therefore], when they had testified and preached [spoken] the word of the Lord, returned to [towards] Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in [to] many villages of the Samaritans*] Peter and John had not been sent forth to make an extended missionary journey, but only to confirm the work of the Evangelists who had first preached and baptized in Samaria, by laying their hands upon the converts. This done they returned to their place in Jerusalem, but by the way preached in such villages of Samaria as lay in their road.

26—40. PHILIP BAPTIZES AN ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.

26. *And the angel of the Lord*] The Gk. has *an angel*. While Peter and John were carrying on the work of Philip in Samaria, God directs the Evangelist to a new scene of labour.

spake unto Philip] Most probably in a vision as to Cornelius (x. 3) and to Peter (xi. 5).

saying, Arise, and go toward the south] Gaza was the southernmost of the five great cities which the Philistines had formerly occupied, and

- 27 down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to
28 Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his

was on the route which a traveller from Jerusalem to Egypt would follow. In 96 B.C. the city of Gaza had been destroyed and its inhabitants massacred by Alexander Jannæus (Joseph. *Ant.* XIII. 13. 3), but it had been rebuilt by Gabinius (*Antiq.* XIV. 5. 3), though it is said that the restored city was nearer the sea than the ancient one. It continued to be a city of importance (see *Antiq.* XV. 7. 3 and XVII. 11. 4), and it could not therefore be to the city that the word "desert" which follows must be referred. From Samaria Philip would come directly south, and leaving Jerusalem on the east strike the road at some distance from that city.

unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza] There was more than one road from Jerusalem to Gaza, the more northern route went first to Ascalon and then by the coast to Gaza, another road was by Hebron and through the more desert country which lay to the west of it, and this is most likely the road intended in the narrative.

which is desert] The Greek puts these words in a separate clause, "this is desert," as is common in Hebrew. This disjunction has raised the question whether they belong to the direction which the angel was giving to Philip, or are an insertion by St Luke to mark the scene of the interview more clearly. If they had been inserted as an explanation it is not likely they would have been so brief, whereas if we regard them as a portion of the speech of the angel they contain all that was needed for Philip's instruction. That road toward Gaza which passed through the desert explains exactly the place to which he was to go.

27. *behold, a man of Ethiopia*] It is better to supply the substantive verb here, "behold *there was*, &c." otherwise the conjunction at the commencement of the next verse is left untranslated.

Ethiopia, like Cush in the O. T., is a general name given to the country which is now called Nubia and Abyssinia. Its northern portion was the great kingdom of Meroe, which we know was ruled over by queens for a long period (Plin. *H. N.* VI. 29), and it is from this kingdom, most probably, that the eunuch had come. Jews were abundant in Egypt, and this man had become a proselyte to their religion.

under Candace queen of the Ethiopians] We are told by Pliny (l. c.) that this was the name of a series of queens of Meroe, just as Pharaoh at an early period and Ptolemy subsequently were general names for the kings of Egypt, and Cæsar for the Roman emperors.

and had come to Jerusalem for to worship] As proselytes did, as well as Jews. This we learn from the enumeration of those who were present at the feast of Pentecost (ii. 10), among whom proselytes are

chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto ²⁹ Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And ³⁰ Philip ran *thither* to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some *man* should guide ³¹

expressly named. So (John xii. 20) we find Greeks coming up to the feasts at Jerusalem.

28. *was returning*] The original has a conjunction, “*and* was returning,” i. e. at the termination of the feast.

read Esaias [Isaiah] *the prophet*] He was evidently reading aloud (see v. 30), and this was common among Orientals and was specially the practice of the Jews, who accompanied the reading with a good deal of bodily motion and considered this helpful to study. Thus T. B. *Erubin* 53 b *ad fin.* “Beruriah found a student who was reading, but not aloud; she pushed him and said to him, Is it not written ‘Only when it is well ordered then it is kept’? If it is put in order by all thy two hundred and forty-eight limbs [thy study] will abide, but if not it will not abide. We have heard of a pupil of Rabbi Eliezer who studied but not aloud; and after three years he had forgotten his learning.” And a little afterwards we read “Shemuel said to Rab Jehudah, Clever fellow! Open thy mouth when thou readest the Bible, and open thy mouth when thou studieth the Mishna, in order that the reading may abide, and that thy life may be prolonged. For it says (Prov. iv. 22), For life are they to them that find them” (or as the Rabbis preferred to interpret it, “to them that utter them forth”).

29. *Then* [And] *the Spirit said unto Philip*] i. e. by a prompting from within.

Go near, and join thyself to this chariot] No doubt this royal treasurer had a numerous retinue, and a single traveller on a desert road would be doing what was natural in attaching himself to a train of people who were journeying in the same direction. Philip would therefore be able to approach and hear what was read without being deemed an intruder.

30. *And Philip ran thither to him*] Better, *ran up*. There is only the verb in the Greek.

Understandest thou, &c.] Philip’s question refers to the application of the words. Of their reference to Jesus the eunuch could of course know nothing, but he might have heard some of the Jewish expositions of the passage. There is a play on the words in the original which it is impossible to reproduce in a translation.

31. *except some man* [one] *should* [shall] *guide me*] The eunuch, living far away from the received expounders of the Scriptures, feels that in a dark passage like that which he was reading he has need of trained instruction. He uses therefore the word which is employed for the guidance given by teacher to pupil. Our Lord uses it [Matt. xv. 14; Luke vi. 39] reproachfully of the blind guidance which the scribes and Pharisees in His day were giving to the people who came to them for instruction. He uses the same word for the guidance of

me? And he desired Philip that *he* would come up and
 32 sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was
 this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and
 like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he
 33 not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was
 taken away: and who shall declare his generation?
 34 for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch
 answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the
 35 prophet this? of himself, or of some other *man*? Then Philip

the Holy Spirit (John xvi. 13). It was a marked feature in the teaching of the Jews that explanations of Scripture were received from generation to generation, and that only was highly valued by them which a man had received from his teachers. Such a system accounts for the permanence of all their traditions.

And he desired [besought] Philip that he would come up and sit with him] The verb implies a very earnest request, and betokens the great desire which the eunuch had for more enlightenment.

32. *The place of the scripture]* The A. V. omits the conjunction at the beginning of this verse. Read, *Now* the place, &c. The word rendered "place" signifies the whole *context* of the passage. The eunuch was studying the whole account of the sufferer whom the prophet here describes. The verses quoted here are Isaiah liii. 7, 8, and are given word for word from the LXX. which it is most probable that the eunuch was reading, as being made in Egypt that version was most likely to be circulated among those Jews with whom this man would be brought into communication. Philip also belonging to the Grecians (vi. 5) would be most familiar with the Greek translation. It will be seen that the translation differs in some points from the original, but yet it is sufficiently close in sense to express the intention of the prophet or rather the "mind of the Spirit" in the prophecy, and on this translation therefore Philip founds his teaching.

33. *in his humiliation, &c.]* The Hebrew text signifies "Through oppression and through judgement (i. e. punishment) he was taken away."

who shall declare his generation?] i. e. who shall describe his contemporaries, men who under a form of judicial punishment oppressed the sufferer, and put him to death?

for his life is taken from the earth] The Hebrew has "for he was cut off out of the land of the living." It will be seen from a comparison of the Hebrew and the LXX. that the latter is in some parts rather a paraphrase than a translation.

Some of the Jews interpreted this passage of the Messiah and some of the congregation of Israel. In the Targum of Jonathan these two interpretations run side by side.

34. *of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?]* As Isaiah lxi. was held by the Jews to relate to Isaiah himself,

opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on *their* way, ³⁶ they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And ³⁷ Philip said, If thou believest with all *thine* heart, *thou* mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand ³⁸ still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they ³⁹ were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, &c.,” so the eunuch enquires whether the words he has been reading have the same reference.

35. *and began at the same [this] scripture, and preached unto him Jesus]* It can hardly be doubted that during his sojourn in Jerusalem the eunuch had heard the history of the new teachers who had created such an excitement in the city, and so he would have had some story told him of the founder of the new community, but his informants would have been Jews, and he would only have heard from them such a version of what had been done as represented Jesus as one of the many deceivers who abounded in those times.

36. *And as they went on their [the] way]* We must suppose that Philip travelled for some time with the eunuch, for not only has he explained that in Jesus was fulfilled all that the prophets had spoken concerning the sufferings of the Messiah, but has taught him that believers in Jesus are to be admitted into the Christian Church by baptism, of which sacrament he desires to be a partaker at once.

37. *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God]* The whole of this verse is omitted in the oldest MSS. It probably found its way into the text of those MSS. where it does exist from the margin. Such a margin would be formulated by those who, when the Church had become more extended, and formal professions of faith were the rule before baptism, felt that there was a want of completeness in the narrative unless some such confession were supposed to have been made. Thus the margin became a kind of exposition, and in the end found acceptance in the text.

38. *And he commanded the chariot to stand still]* i.e. he ordered the chariot-driver to stop, and of course the whole retinue would see what took place, and they may certainly be regarded as the nucleus of a congregation to be established in Ethiopia. Tradition tells us that the eunuch laboured to evangelize his countrymen, and none were more likely to be influenced by his teaching than those who were present at his baptism and were, with him, witnesses of the way in which Philip was taken from them.

and they went down both into the water] As was the custom among the Jews. Thus John baptized his followers in the Jordan.

39. *the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip]* Just as Obadiah ex-

away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he
 40 went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus:
 and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he
 came to Cesarea.

1—9. *Saul's mission to Damascus and his Conversion.*

9 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter
 against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

pected Elijah would be caught away while he himself went on his errand
 to Ahab (1 Kings xviii. 12). Compare the language of Ezekiel (iii. 12,
 14, viii. 3, &c.), "So the spirit lifted me up and took me away."

that [and] the eunuch saw him no more] This marvellous removal of
 Philip would confirm the eunuch and his companions in their faith.
 They would recognize that he who had been sent unto them was a man
 of God.

and he went on his way rejoicing] The Greek says "for he went,
 &c.," and thus gives the reason why Philip was seen no more of the
 eunuch. He did not go back, like the sons of the prophets at Jericho,
 who went to seek Elijah, but being filled with joy at the new light
 which God had sent to him, felt no anxiety for the messenger by whom
 God had sent it, but an assurance that he was cared for by the hand
 which had sent him forth.

40. But Philip was found at Azotus] That is, he appeared again
 and continued the work of his ministry. The expression is a translation
 of a Hebrew verb which is often rendered in A.V. "to be present."
 Cp. Esther i. 5, "that were present," and in the margin, Heb.
 "found."

Azotus is the ancient Ashdod (1 Sam. v. 1—7), one of the five chief
 cities of the Philistines when the Israelites settled in Canaan.

till he came to Cesarea] This was Cæsarea Sebaste, so called in
 honour of Augustus (Greek, *Sebastos*) Cæsar (Joseph. *Antiq.* xvi. 5. 1).
 It was the chief city of Palestine under the Roman rule, and lay at the
 extreme north of the plain of Sharon. It is mentioned in the Acts
 as the place at which Cornelius was stationed (x. 1), and it seems that
 Philip made his home there (xxi. 8).

IX. 1—9. SAUL'S MISSION TO DAMASCUS AND HIS CONVERSION.

1. And [But] Saul, yet breathing out threatenings [threatening] It
 is better to translate the conjunction adversatively here, as the new
 subject is not connected except with the first sentence of chap. viii.
 The verb in this clause should be rendered "breathing," not
 "breathing out." Threatening and slaughter was, as it were, the
 atmosphere in which Saul was living.

and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord] We are not told
 of any other death, but Stephen's, in which Saul was a participator,

and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, ² that if he found any of *this* way, whether they were men or women, he might bring *them* bound unto Jerusalem. And as ³

but we can gather from his own words (Acts xxvi. 10) "when they were put to death, I gave my voice [vote] against them," that the protomartyr was not the only one who was killed in the time of this persecution. It has been suggested that the zeal which Saul shewed at the time of Stephen's death led to his election into the Sanhedrin, and so he took a judicial part in the later stages of the persecution, and, it may be, from a desire to justify the choice of those who had placed him in authority, he sought to be appointed over the enquiry after the Christians in Damascus. We gather from xxvi. 10 that before this inquisitorial journey he had been armed with the authority of the chief priests in his search after the Christians in Jerusalem.

went unto the high priest] who would most likely be the authority through whom the power, which the Great Sanhedrin claimed to exercise, in religious matters, over Jews in foreign cities, would be put in motion.

2. and desired of him letters] These are the papers which constituted his "authority and commission" (xxvi. 12). From that passage we learn that the issuing of these papers was the act of the whole body, for Paul there says they were "from the chief priests."

to Damascus] Of the history of this most ancient (Gen. xiv. 15) city in the world, see the *Dictionary of the Bible*. It had from the earliest period been mixed up with the history of the Jews, and great numbers of Jews were living there at this time, as we can see from the subsequent notices of their conduct in this chapter. We are told by Josephus (*B. J.* II. 20. 2) that ten thousand Jews were slaughtered in a massacre in Damascus in Nero's time, and that the wives of the Damascenes were almost all of them addicted to the Jewish religion.

to the synagogues] As at Jerusalem, so in Damascus the synagogues were numerous, and occupied by different classes and nationalities. Greek-Jews were sure to be found in so large a city.

that if he found any of this way] Better, "any that were of the Way." The name "the Way" soon became a distinctive appellation of the Christian religion. The fuller expression "the way of truth" is found 2 Pet. ii. 2; and the brief term is common in the Acts. See xix. 9, 23, xxii. 4, xxiv. 14, 22.

whether...men or women] We can mark the fury with which Saul raged against the Christians from this mention of the "women" as included among those whom he committed or desired to commit to prison. Cp. viii. 3 and xxii. 4. The women played a more conspicuous part among the early Christians than they were allowed to do among the Jews. See note on i. 14.

he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem] That the whole authority of the Great Sanhedrin might be employed for the extinction of the new teaching.

he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul,

3. *And as he journeyed*] There were two roads by which Saul could make his journey, one the caravan road which led from Egypt to Damascus, and kept near the coast line of the Holy Land till it struck eastward to cross the Jordan at the north of the Lake of Tiberias. To join this road Saul must have at first turned westward to the sea. The other way led through Neapolis and crossed the Jordan south of the Sea of Tiberias, and passing through Gadara went north-eastward to Damascus. We have no means whereby to decide by which road Saul and his companions took their way. The caravan road was a distance of one hundred and thirty-six miles, and occupied six days for the journey.

he came near Damascus] The original is more full. Read, "it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus." The party must have reached the near neighbourhood of the city, for his companions (v. 8) "led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus" after the vision.

and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven] In xxii. 6 we are told that the time of the day was "about noon" when the vision was seen, and in xxvi. 13, Paul says that "at mid-day" the light was "above the brightness of the sun." The mid-day glare of an Eastern sun is of itself exceedingly bright, and the hour was chosen, we cannot doubt, in order that "the glory" of this heaven-sent light should not be confounded with any natural phenomenon. It was in the midst of this glory that Christ was seen by Saul (1 Cor. xv. 8), so that he can enumerate himself among those who had beheld the Lord after His resurrection.

4. *And he fell to the earth*] Dazzled by the intense brightness. From xxvi. 14 we find that not only Saul but his companions were struck down by the light, though there was more in the vision which he beheld than was made evident to them, and by reason of the greater glory which was manifested to him, his natural sight was blinded.

and heard a voice] We cannot represent in English the different case of the noun in this verse, and in 7. The Greek puts here the accusative case and there the genitive, and thus indicates that there was a difference in the nature of the hearing of Saul and of his companions. And Paul in xxii. 9 marks the distinction in his own narration, for he says "They heard not the voice (accusative) of him that spake to me." As this difference is made both in St Luke's first account, and in the speech of St Paul at Jerusalem, it seems reasonable to accept the explanation which has long ago been given of this grammatical variation, and to understand that Saul heard an articulate sound, a voice which spake to him, while his companions were only conscious of a sound from which they comprehended nothing. St Paul then is precise when he says "they heard not the voice" which

why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, s Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And 6, he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into

I heard, and St Luke is correct when in v. 7 he says "they heard a sound."

saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?] It is very noteworthy that in all the three accounts of the vision the Greek text of Saul's name is a transliteration of the Hebrew, shewing that we have here a very close adherence to the words of Jesus. The Lord spake in the language of His people, and both the Evangelist and the Apostle have preserved for us this remarkable feature of the heavenly address. The only other place where the Hebrew form of Saul's name is retained is in the speech of Ananias when (ix. 17) he comes to see the convert in his blindness. As he also had received a communication from Jesus in connection with Saul's conversion, we can understand how the same form of the name would have been given to him. Moreover he was himself, to judge from his name, a Hebrew, and therefore that form would be most natural on his lips. Except in these cases St Luke always employs the Greek form of the word.

Christ speaks of Himself as persecuted by Saul, because "in all the affliction of his people he is afflicted" (Isa. lxiii. 9), and "whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zech. ii. 8).

5. *And he said, Who art thou, Lord?*] Saul is sensible of the Divine nature of the vision, and shews this by his address. The appearance of Christ, though in a glorified body, must have been like that which He wore in His humanity, and since Saul does not recognize Jesus, we may almost certainly conclude that he had not known Him during His ministerial life.

And the Lord said] The best texts have only "And he," the verb "said" being understood.

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest] In xxii. 8 St Paul gives the fuller form of the sentence, "I am Jesus of Nazareth." By using this name, the being whose Divine nature Saul has already acknowledged by calling him "Lord," at once and for ever puts an end to Saul's persecuting rage, for he is made to see, what his master Gamaliel had before suggested (v. 39), that to persecute Jesus was to "fight against God."

it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6. *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him*] These words have been inserted here in some MSS. for the sake of making in this place a complete narrative by the combination and adaptation of the additional particulars given in xxvi. 14 and xxii. 10. It is easy to understand the desire which prompted such a combination. The best MSS. omit the words here, giving them where they more naturally find place, in the personal narratives of St Paul himself.

6. *Arise*] The MSS. which omit the above words insert a conjunc-

7 the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no *man*. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no *man*: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

tion here. Read, *But* arise. Saul had continued prostrate as he had fallen down at the first.

and go into the city] A proof that the party of travellers had arrived very nearly at Damascus. Tradition here, as in many other instances, has fixed on a spot as the scene of this Divine vision. It is placed outside the eastern gate, and about a mile from the city. Such a situation answers very well, but its fitness is the only ground for attaching any weight to the tradition.

and it shall be told thee what thou must do] In xxvi. 16—18 we have an abstract given by the Apostle of the labours for which Christ designed him, and the words in that passage are placed as a portion of the Divine communication made before Saul entered Damascus, but as in that narrative no mention is made of Ananias or his visit, we may conclude that we have instead a brief notice of the message which Ananias brought to him, and that therein is contained a declaration of what Jesus in the vision only spoke of as “what thou must do.”

7. *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless*] Cp. Dan. x. 7, “I Daniel alone saw the vision, for the men that were with me saw not the vision, but a great quaking fell upon them.”

Saul was not only furnished with authority, but also with men who were to carry out his intentions and bring the prisoners to Jerusalem. Painters have represented the travellers as riding on horseback, but there is no warrant for this in any form of the narrative.

stood here means “remained fixed,” “did not move.” They had been stricken down as well as Saul (xxvi. 14).

hearing a [the] voice] On the variation of case here, and the probable difference of meaning, see note on v. 4.

but seeing [beholding] no man] The verb is the same that is used by Stephen (vii. 56), “Behold, I *see* the heavens opened.” In their astonishment, and guided by the sound, Saul’s companions lifted up their faces to the sky, but as with the words so with the appearance of Jesus; it was unseen by all but one, but to him was manifest enough to form a ground of his confidence in his Apostolic mission: “Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (1 Cor. ix. 1).

8. *and [but] when his eyes were opened, he saw no man* [nothing] The vision had struck him blind. He opened his eyes, but their power had been taken away. Thus his physical condition becomes a fit representation of the mental blindness which he afterwards (xxvi. 9) deploras: “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”

but [and] they led him by the hand] His companions saw all things as before, and were able to guide him who had started forth as the leader in their mission of persecution.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat, nor drink.

10—22. *Saul's sight restored. He preaches in Damascus.*

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named ¹⁰ Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias

9. *And he was three days without sight*] During this time we cannot but think the illumination of his mind was being perfected by the Spirit. He had been convinced by the vision that Jesus was risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. But more than this was needed for the preparation of this mighty missionary. He himself (Gal. i. 16) speaks of God revealing His Son not only *to* but *in* him, and that his conferences were not with flesh and blood, and we are told below (v. 12) that the coming of Ananias had been made known unto him by vision. To this solemn time of darkness may also perhaps be referred those "visions and revelations of the Lord" which the Apostle speaks of to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xii. 1—4). While his bodily powers were for a time in suspense, he may fitly describe himself as not knowing whether what he saw was revealed to him "in the body or out of the body," and it was the spiritual vision only which saw the third heaven and paradise, and the spirit heard those "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

and neither did eat nor drink] The mental anguish for a time overpowered the natural craving for food. The newly called Apostle was contemplating in all its enormity his sin in persecuting the Church of Christ, and though there were times of comfort and refreshing before Ananias came, yet the great thought which filled Saul's mind would be sorrow for his late mad and misdirected zeal, and so the three days of blindness formed a period of deep penitence.

10—22. SAUL'S SIGHT RESTORED. HE PREACHES IN DAMASCUS.

10. *And [Now] there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias*] Of this disciple we have no further mention in Holy Writ except in chap. xxii. 12, where St Paul describes him as "a devout man according to the Law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwell" at Damascus. Whether he had become a Christian during the life of Jesus, or was among the Jewish converts on the day of Pentecost or at some subsequent time and had been forced to flee from Jerusalem by the persecution which followed on the death of Stephen, we are not told, but we can gather, from the words which he employs in expressing his reluctance to visit Saul, that he had much and trustworthy communication still with the Holy City, for he knows both of the havoc which the persecutor has caused, and of the purpose of his mission to Damascus. On the name Ananias see v. 1, note.

and to him said the Lord in a vision] As Saul had been prepared for the visit by a vision, so Ananias is by a vision instructed to go to him. Dean Howson's remarks (*Life and Epistles of St Paul*, I. 101) on this preparation and its similarity to the preparation of Peter and Cornelius

- 11 And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called
 12 Saul, of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his*
 13 hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusa-
 14 lem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to
 15 bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him,

deserve to be dwelt on. "The simultaneous preparation of the hearts of Ananias and Saul, and the simultaneous preparation of those of Peter and Cornelius—the questioning and hesitation of Peter and the questioning and hesitation of Ananias—the one doubting whether he might make friendship with the Gentiles, the other doubting whether he might approach the enemy of the Church—the unhesitating obedience of each when the Divine will was made clearly known—the state of mind in which both the Pharisee and the Centurion were found—each waiting to see what the Lord would say unto them—this close analogy will not be forgotten by those who reverently read the two consecutive chapters, in which the baptism of Saul and the baptism of Cornelius are narrated in the Acts of the Apostles." When so much criticism has been expended to shew that the Acts is a work of fiction written at a late period to minimize certain differences supposed to exist between the teaching of St Paul and that of St Peter, it is well to know that others have seen, in these undoubted analogies, proofs of the working of a God who is ever the same, and who would have all men to be saved through Jesus Christ.

11. *into the street which is called Straight*] A long straight street still runs through Damascus, and is probably (so persistent is every feature of Oriental life) the same in which Ananias found Saul in the house of Judas.

12. *and hath seen in a vision*] The oldest MSS. omit "in a vision." It could only have been in this wise that Saul had been informed, and the words are merely a gloss.

13. *I have heard by [from] many, &c.*] These words seem to point to a longer residence of Ananias in Damascus than he could have made if he had only left Jerusalem after the death of Stephen; and so do the words (xxii. 12) which speak of his good report among all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus.

how much evil he hath done to thy saints, &c.] The Christian converts were probably called "saints," i.e. "holy persons," at a very early period after the death of Christ because of the marvellous outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon the first converts, cp. 1 Pet. i. 15. The word is of frequent occurrence in the greetings of St Paul's Epistles.

14. *all that call on thy name*] To call on Christ is the same as to

Go *thy way*: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great *things* he must suffer ¹⁶ for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and ¹⁷ entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And ¹⁸ immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales:

be a believer in Him. The expression is used as an apposition to "saints" in 1 Cor. i. 2, and thence we see what in the Pauline language was meant by the word "saints."

15. *he is a chosen vessel unto me*] Literally, "a vessel of election." This is a Hebrew form of expression, cp. Jer. xxii. 28, where King Coniah is called "a vessel wherein is no pleasure." So Jer. li. 34, "He hath made me [to be] an empty vessel," literally, "vessel of emptiness." *to bear my name*] i.e. this shall be the load or duty which I will lay upon this my chosen instrument.

before the Gentiles] This was doubtless a revelation to Ananias, who as a devout Jew would not yet have contemplated the inclusion of the whole world in the Church of Christ. The Gentiles are placed first in the enumeration, because among them specially was Saul's field of labour to be. For the wide spirit in which the Apostle embraced his commission, see Rom. i. 13, 14, &c.

and kings] As before Agrippa (xxvi. 1, 32) and at Rome, in consequence of the appeal to be heard before Cæsar.

16. *for I will shew him how great [many] things he must suffer*] Cp. Paul's own words (xx. 23), "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." The truth of this is borne out by that long list of the Apostle's sufferings which he enumerates in his letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xi. 23—28) and the less detailed list in the same Epistle (vi. 4—5).

17. *Brother Saul*] The Hebrew form of the name, see v. 4, note. *the Lord, even Jesus*] Combining the name "Lord" used by Saul when the vision appeared, with that "Jesus" which Christ, speaking from His glory, uttered in answer to Saul's enquiry, Who art thou?

that appeared unto thee in the way] Thus was brought to Saul after his three days' blindness a confirmation from without of the reality of what he had seen on the road as he came. The words at the same time give an earnest that here was the teacher who would explain to him what he was to do.

and be filled with the Holy Ghost] On this occasion the Holy Ghost was bestowed without the laying on of the hands of one of the twelve.

18. *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales*] The word rendered "scales" is used as a technical term for a disease of the eye by Hippocrates, and the verb derived from it is found (Tobit xi. 13) used of the cure of a disease of similar character. "And the whiteness

and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized, and when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the

pilled away from the corners of his eyes." This "whiteness" is rendered in the margin (Tob. ii. 10) "white films," and was clearly something like the "scales" which caused Saul's blindness, and a process for the cure thereof is called (iii. 17) "to *scale* away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes." St Paul (xxii. 11) ascribes his blindness to the glory of the heavenly light, and it may have been some secretion, caused by the intensity of that vision, which formed over them, and at his cure fell away. Some have thought that his constant employment of an amanuensis, and the mention of the large characters in which he wrote in his Epistle to the Galatians (vi. 11) "Ye see in what large letters I have written to you," are indications that the Apostle suffered permanently in his eyesight from the heavenly vision.

and he received [recovered, and so in 17] *sight forthwith*] The oldest MSS. omit the last word.

and arose, and was baptized] In the fuller account (xxii. 16) we learn that the exhortation to be baptized was part of the message with which Ananias was charged, and so was divinely commissioned to receive Saul thus into the Christian Church.

19. *and when he had received* [taken] *meat, &c.*] Needed after his three days fast, but (says Calvin) "he refreshed not his body with meat until his soul had received strength."

Then was Saul, certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus] The word Saul is not found in the oldest MSS. Read "And he was, &c." The expression rendered "certain days" is the same which in x. 48, xv. 36, xvi. 12, xxiv. 24, and xxv. 13 is used by St Luke, and in all cases the time indicated by them must have been brief. It was for this amount of time that Peter tarried with Cornelius, the words are applied to a short period spent by Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, to the time of St Paul's stay at Philippi, to the short time which Paul was detained at Cæsarea before his hearing by Felix, and to a like period between the arrival of Festus and the visit which Agrippa made to salute him as the new Governor. In most of these instances the time intended must have been very brief, and it is important to notice this here, because in v. 23 we shall find another expression which is translated "many days" and seems designed by the writer to indicate a somewhat longer period. It is clear, from the way in which "disciples" are here mentioned, that there was a numerous body of Christians in Damascus at this early period. Saul dwelt with them now not as an enemy but as a brother, by which name Ananias had been directed to greet him.

20. *And straightway he preached Christ* [proclaimed Jesus] *in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God*] The best MSS. read *Jesus* in this verse, and this naturally is correct. The preaching which was to be to

synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard ²¹ *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that *intent*, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, ²² and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is *very* Christ.

the Jews a stumbling-block was that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, their long-expected Messiah.

He went, as was Christ's custom also, into the synagogues as the most likely places where to find an audience who would listen to his proclamation. His letters to the synagogues (*v.* 2) were not delivered, but he came as the herald of one of higher authority than the chief priests. For St Paul's constant practice of teaching in the Jewish synagogues, see xiii. 5, xiv. 1, xvii. 1, 10, xviii. 4, 19, xix. 8.

21. *But all that heard him were amazed*] Saul's fame as a persecutor of Christians was well known to the Jews of Damascus, and the authorities of the synagogues may have been instructed beforehand to welcome him as a zealous agent. If so their amazement is easy to understand. It is clear from what follows in this verse that they knew of his mission and the intention thereof, though Saul did not bring them his "commission and authority." We should gather also from the strong expression "destroyed," used to describe Saul's career in Jerusalem, that the slaughter of the Christians there had not been limited to the stoning of Stephen.

22. *But Saul increased the more in strength*] i.e. he became more and more energetic in his labours and the Holy Ghost gave him more power. His fitness for the labour on which he was entering was very great. He possessed all the Jewish learning of a zealous pupil of Gamaliel, and now that he had seen Jesus in the glory of the Godhead, he could use his stores of learning for the support of the new teaching in such wise as to commend it to those Jews who were looking for the consolation of Israel. But these would naturally be the smallest portion of his hearers. The rest of the Jews were confounded. They heard their Scripture applied by a trained mind, and shewn to be applicable to the life of Jesus. They could not at this time make an attack on Saul, for they were paralysed by what they heard, and it was only when some time had elapsed that they resolved to continue in their rejection of Jesus, and then, at a later time, their persecution of Saul began.

proving that this is very [the] Christ] The word here rendered "proving" is used again in xvi. 10, and translated "assuredly gathering." The idea conveyed by it is that of putting things side by side, and so making a comparison and forming a conclusion. Thus Saul, well equipped with a knowledge of the ancient Scriptures, set before his hearers a description of the Messiah as he is there portrayed, and relating the life history of Jesus, shewed them that in Him the Scriptures of the prophets had been fulfilled.

23—25. *A Plot against Saul's Life. His Flight from Damascus.*

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took
24 counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of

23—25. A PLOT AGAINST SAUL'S LIFE. HIS FLIGHT FROM DAMASCUS.

23. *And after that [when] many days were fulfilled*] As the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in v. 26 seems to follow closely upon the events narrated in v. 25, and as that visit was not made till after the retirement into Arabia of which St Paul speaks (Gal. i. 17, 18) thus: "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter," we must place the visit to Arabia between the events recorded in v. 22 and the fresh narration which commences in this verse. St Luke has marked, as it seems, the two periods as distinct by calling one time of residence "certain days," and the other "many days." The following seems to have been the order of events. Saul preached for "certain days" in Damascus immediately after his conversion. He then made his journey into Arabia, either for preaching or for retirement and spiritual communion, after which he made a second visit to Damascus, on which latter occasion his enemies sought to take his life. This latter visit is here spoken of as lasting "many days." The words thus translated are used in several places of the Acts; as in this chapter, v. 43, of the stay made by Peter at Joppa after the raising of Dorcas; also xviii. 18, of the time, "a good while," which St Paul spent in Corinth after he had been brought before Gallio; and in xxvii. 7 of the "many days" of slow sailing during the Apostle's voyage to Rome. It is clear from these examples that the period covered by the words is very indefinite, but if we reckon the "three years" (Gal. i. 18) from Saul's conversion, then the first and last times of residence in Damascus would be included in that period, and we need not then extend either the stay in Arabia or the duration of this later visit to Damascus over a great while, especially if we remember that, to a Jew, one whole year with the end of the preceding and the beginning of the succeeding one was counted for three years.

the Jews took counsel to kill him] The deliberation and previous preparation implied in this expression are such as would take place, not among the people who were "confounded" by Saul's first preaching, but when they had become enraged against him after his second visit, when his words would be even more full of power than before, by reason of the time spent in preaching in Arabia, or more probably in spiritual communion to prepare himself for the labours which God had set before him.

24. *but their laying await [plot] was known of Saul*] Perhaps from the information of some of the Christian disciples, who would be well

Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* ²⁵ down by the wall in a basket.

disposed to Saul by what they had heard of him from Ananias, and who played the part of friends in aiding his escape from Damascus.

And they watched the gates day and night to kill him] The gates were the places to which one fleeing from death would naturally make his way. St Paul says (2 Cor. xi. 32) of the circumstances under which this plot was made against his life, that "In Damascus the governor [Ethnarch] of King Aretas kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me." Hence it appears that it was no mere attack made by the Jews resident in Damascus, but they had gained the support of the authorities for the time being. We do not know enough of the history of Syria and Arabia at this period to be able to explain with certainty how an Ethnarch of Aretas, who was king of Arabia Petræa, came to be holding Damascus. But we do know (Joseph. *Antiq.* XVIII. 3. 1—4) that Aretas had been at war with Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, who in consequence of his attachment to his brother Philip's wife, had forsaken his own wife, who was the daughter of Aretas. Herod had appealed to Rome, and been promised the help of the Roman power, but the death of Tiberius (A.D. 37) checked the march of Vitellius, the Roman governor of Syria, into Arabia, and he thereupon returned to Antioch. It may have been that Aretas, encouraged by this withdrawal, had advanced, and in the general confusion had taken possession of Damascus. He had, in a former stage of the war, destroyed the army of Herod; and some of the Jews, who hated Herod, spoke of this destruction of his troops as a Divine judgement for his murder of John the Baptist. We can understand then that the Jews in Damascus might under such circumstances favour Aretas, and in return for their support be aided by his Ethnarch in an attempt on the life of Saul.

Or the occupation of Damascus by Aretas may have been (as Dean Howson suggests) in consequence of the change of policy which took place so widely at the death of Tiberius; and Caligula, in contradiction of what his predecessor had been designing, to crush Aretas, may have put the Arabian king in command of the city of Damascus for a time.

25. *Then the disciples took him by night]* The oldest MSS. read "But his disciples, &c.," and this well-supported reading favours the explanation of the "many days" given in v. 24. On his second visit Saul had remained long enough to have gathered round him a party of followers who accepted him as their teacher.

and let him down by [through] the wall in a basket] In 2 Cor. xi. 33 St Paul says, "And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall and escaped." Such apertures can be found in the walls of houses in all defenced cities, and it was by such a way that Rahab let the spies escape from Jericho (Josh. ii. 15), and Michal aided David's escape (1 Sam. xix. 12). The basket here mentioned (*spuris*) is the same that

26—31. *Saul visits Jerusalem. He is sent away to Tarsus.
The Churches have rest.*

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to
join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of
27 him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Bar-

is spoken of (Matt. xv. 37) at the feeding of the four thousand in the mountain district west of the Sea of Galilee. It appears to have been large and soft, fit for carrying a large quantity of miscellaneous articles from the plain into the hills, while the baskets (*cophinoi*) spoken of at the feeding of the five thousand (Matt. xiv. 20) were such as the multitude, which in that case had followed Jesus on foot out of the cities, would be likely to carry in their hands. In a basket of the former kind Saul might easily be wrapped and then lowered over the city wall.

26—31. SAUL VISITS JERUSALEM. HE IS SENT AWAY TO TARSUS.
THE CHURCHES HAVE REST.

26. *And when Saul [he] was come to Jerusalem*] The oldest MSS. omit the proper name. Saul had never visited Jerusalem since the day when he set out on his inquisitorial journey to Damascus, and he could only be known at that time to the Christians as their determined enemy.

he assayed to join himself to the disciples] If as a Jew he had gone to Alexandria or any other city where Jews were numerous, his first thought would have been to search out his co-religionists; so he acts now. He seeks to join the Christian community. But his own language (Gal. i. 16) shews us that he had made no attempt to spread the news of his changed feelings among the Christian congregations. "I conferred not with flesh and blood," he says, "but I went into Arabia, and returned to Damascus." An absence of three years, mainly in a region whence little news could come of his conversion and labours, and the memory of what evil he had done in days gone by, were enough to justify some hesitation about receiving him, on the part of the disciples.

but [and] they were all afraid of him] The conjunction is the ordinary copulative, and connects the two clauses, Saul's desire and the behaviour of the disciples. In Gal. i. 18 St Paul says his wish was to see Peter, and this we can very well understand, for though Saul had received his commission directly from Jesus, there were many things in the history of the life of Christ which could be best learned from the lips of him who had been with Jesus from the commencement of His ministry. But at first Saul came to the Christians at Jerusalem as an ordinary believer.

and believed not that he was a disciple] Here we see how little was known in Jerusalem of the history of Saul since his conversion, and we can understand those words of his own (Gal. i. 22), "I was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judæa which were in Christ." God had been training him for his work among the Gentiles, and although he was brought to Jerusalem that all might know that the Gospel was one, and

nabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was ²⁸ with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he ²⁹ spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed

that Saul was sent forth even as the twelve, yet no attempt is made by St Luke at this point, where it might have been most expected, to set forth the unanimity of Paul and Peter. It is left for St Paul himself to tell us of his desire to see Peter, and the historian only says they all were afraid of him.

27. *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles*] i.e. to such of the Apostles as happened to be then in Jerusalem. During a short space of fifteen days it is easy to understand that all but Peter and James might be absent from Jerusalem. St Paul tells us he only saw these two during his visit (Gal. i. 19), and all that he says is perfectly consistent with St Luke's narrative. Barnabas, who introduced Saul to the Apostles, has already been mentioned as a Levite of Cyprus (iv. 36), and from the proximity of Cyprus to Cilicia, and the distinction of the schools of Tarsus, a conjecture has been hazarded that Barnabas may have been known to Saul before they came to Jerusalem. This would explain how it came to pass that while the other disciples were afraid of him, Barnabas listened to his statement and repeated it to the rest of the Church.

and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, &c.] It is worthy of notice in how many forms the statement of the appearance of Jesus to Saul is repeated. This was indeed the turning-point of the Apostle's life, Jesus of Nazareth seen as the glorified Son of God.

and how he had preached [spoken] boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus] Whether the knowledge of Barnabas was derived from Saul himself or from other sources we are not told, but in the political turmoil of the times (see v. 24, note) we may easily suppose that the teachings of a preacher who appeared for a brief space, and then retired from Damascus, and who had only lately reappeared, would not be widely known among the Church at Jerusalem.

28. *And he was with them, &c.*] i.e. for the fifteen days during which his visit lasted he was received into the fellowship of the Church.

29. *And he spake boldly, &c.*] The conjunction is left out in the best MSS. Read, "speaking boldly, &c."

in the name of the Lord Jesus] The last word is omitted in the oldest MSS.

and disputed against the Grecians] The Greek text says "and he spake and disputed, &c." These Grecians were the Greek-Jews at whose instigation Stephen had been put to death. Now Saul, who had consented unto that martyrdom, is exposed to the like persecution.

against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.
 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to
 31 Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

32—35. *Peter heals a paralytic at Lydda.*

32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all

The very same word “disputed” is here used which was employed to describe the controversies with the protomartyr (vi. 9), and it is found nowhere else in this book. But it is worth notice that the attack is now reversed. The Grecians disputed with Stephen, now Saul disputes with them.

but they went about [sought] to slay him] As the Jews in Damascus had done.

30. *Which when the brethren knew]* Lit. “And when the brethren knew it.” The disciples were informed as those of Damascus had been of the plot in that city.

they brought him down to Cesarea] i.e. to the seaport so called, not to Cæsarea Philippi, for the latter place was only touched by the road which led from Tyre to Damascus. The former was a place from which Tarsus could be reached either by sea or by the road which ran northward along the coast of Syria.

and sent him forth to Tarsus] where he was born, and which perhaps, next to Jerusalem, would appear to be the best centre from which his work could be carried on. For an account of Tarsus and its fame as a seat of heathen learning, see *Dict. of the Bible*.

31. *Then had the churches rest, &c.]* Better, “So the **Church** throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had **peace**.” In the best texts the noun and all the verbs agreeing with it are in the singular number, and what is meant is the whole Christian body, not the various congregations. The cause of this peace for the Christians was that the attention of their persecutors the Jews was turned from them to resist the attempt made by Caligula (Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 8. 2) to have his statue erected in the Temple at Jerusalem. This profanation was averted partly by the determined opposition of the Jews, and partly by the intercession of King Agrippa with the mad Emperor.

32—35. PETER HEALS A PARALYTIC AT LYDDA.

32. *as Peter passed throughout all quarters]* The history now turns from Saul to Peter, to shew us that when the former had been prepared for his special work the latter was taught by revelation that the time had arrived for the next and complete extension of the Church among all nations. Peter had been labouring, as no doubt all the rest of the twelve also (for we have seen that only two were at Je-

quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, ³³ which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ ³⁴ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron ³⁵ saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36—43. *Dorcas raised to life. Peter's stay at Joppa.*

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, ³⁶

rusalem when Saul came thither), in building up the Churches in Judæa and Samaria, and the narrative of two miracles which follow in the history makes intelligible to us the position of Peter when Cornelius is warned to send for him.

he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda] On saints, see above on v. 13.

Lydda] The Hebrew *Lod*, 1 Chron. viii. 12. It was afterwards called *Diospolis*. It was near to Joppa, and a day's journey from Jerusalem. Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 6. 2) calls it "a village not less than a city in largeness."

^{33.} *which had kept his bed eight years]* There could therefore be no doubt cast upon the miraculous nature of his cure.

^{34.} *Jesus Christ maketh thee whole]* As in the cure of the cripple at the Temple-gate (iii. 6), the Apostle makes known that he is but the messenger, and that the healer is Christ. We are not told that Aeneas was a disciple, but it may be inferred that he was among "the saints," and that thus Peter was brought unto him.

^{35.} *all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him]* No doubt his case of eight-years-long paralysis was well known to the dwellers in the village and neighbourhood, and to see such a one about in their midst again would be a cause for general remark and enquiry into the manner of his restoration. "When the Scripture saith *all* it doth not comprehend every one, how many soever it noteth, but it putteth *all* for the more part, or for many, or for the common sort of men" (Calvin on this verse).

Saron] Heb. *Sharon*. It is doubtful whether by this name is intended some village in the neighbourhood of Lydda or the whole district known as the "plain of Sharon," and extending along the coast from Joppa to Cæsarea. No place of this name has been noticed in the neighbourhood, and as in the original the word has the article, "the Sharon," it is better to refer it to the district.

36—43. DORCAS RAISED TO LIFE. PETER'S STAY AT JOPPA.

^{36.} *Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple]* For an account of Joppa, one of the great seaports on the coast of Palestine, see *Dictionary of the Bible*.

which by interpretation is called Dorcas : this *woman* was
 37 full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it
 came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died :
 whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper
 38 chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa,
 and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent
 unto him two men, desiring *him* that *he* would not delay to
 39 come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them.
 When he was come, they brought him into the upper
 chamber : and all the widows stood by him weeping, and
 shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while
 40 she was with them. But Peter put *them* all forth, and

Dorcas is called a *disciple* that it may be seen that under the gospel there is no distinction between male and female (Gal. iii. 28).

named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas] Tabitha is the Aramaic form of a Hebrew proper name (2 Kings xii. 1) which signifies a *gazelle* (cp. Song iv. 5), as does the Greek word *Dorcas*.

this woman was full of good works, &c.] A favourite form of expression with St Luke. Cp. "Stephen full of faith and power" (vi. 8); Elymas, "full of all subtilty" (xiii. 10); and the Ephesians "full of wrath" (xix. 28). The sense is "given up to" or "devoted to."

37. *that she was [fell] sick, and died*] The proceedings which followed on her death are evidence of its reality. The probable reason for deferring the burial was the knowledge that Peter was close at hand, and the hope of the disciples that the power of Jesus might be exercised through him for the restoration to life of so eminent a disciple as Dorcas.

38. *desiring him that he would not delay to come to them*] The best MSS. give a more graphic form to the sentence by the use of the direct entreaty. Read, "intreating him, Delay not to come on to us." It is as though their supplication were "We have heard of the mighty works which Jesus has wrought by thy hands; extend thy journey to us, for we are in great need."

39. *Then [And] Peter arose and went with them*] We may be sure that the Apostle knew, by the Spirit, that it would please God to do something for the help of the distress at Joppa, when he set out with the messengers.

and all the widows stood by him weeping] These were the women who, with the dead Dorcas, had been busy in the good works to which they were all devoted. The petition of such a company was sure to have power with the Apostle, and their action shews how they place the good deeds of her whom they had lost far above their own.

40. *But Peter put them all forth*] As Christ had done (Matt.

kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her *his* hand, and ⁴¹ lift her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. And it was known throughout all ⁴² Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. And it came to ⁴³ pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

ix. 25) at the raising of Jairus' daughter, on which occasion Peter had been present.

and kneeled down, and prayed] Asking God that the consolation to be given to these mourners might be the restoration of the dead woman to life.

and turning him to the body] When by the Spirit's admonition he knew that his prayer was heard.

said, Tabitha, arise] If he spake in the Aramaic dialect, as is most probable, his utterance must have been nearly the same as that of our Lord (Mark v. 41), *Talitha cumi*, at the raising of the daughter of Jairus. But when both these utterances are interpreted in the places where they occur, it is astonishing to find those who would suggest that the *Tabitha* of this verse is an adaptation of the *Talitha* of the Gospel.

41. *when he had called the saints and widows]* These words make it evident that the petition sent to Peter had been the supplication of the whole Christian Church of Joppa, "Come on unto us and help us."

42. *and many believed in the Lord]* There seems to be intended by these words a fuller acceptance of the faith of Jesus than when it is said "they turned to the Lord" (see above, v. 35). The belief here wrought by the resurrection of Dorcas is like that mentioned (John xi. 45) of those who were won to the faith by the raising of Lazarus.

43. *he tarried many days]* On the indefinite nature of the time indicated here see above, v. 23, note.

with one Simon a tanner] The trade of a tanner was held as abominable by the Jews. A wife, it is said, could claim a divorce from a husband who became a tanner (Mishna *K'ethuboth* VII. 10, where is recorded the following story): "It happened at Sidon that a tanner died, and left a brother who was also a tanner. The sages held that his (childless) widow had a right to plead, Thy brother I could bear but I cannot bear thee," and so in this case the woman might refuse to marry her husband's brother.

It is a sign that in the mind of St Peter some usages and prejudices of the Jews were already becoming of small account, when he makes his abode at the house of Simon a tanner. Such a step prepares us for the history of the next chapter, where he is instructed to go and preach to and baptize the Gentile Cornelius.

1—8. *Cornelius is divinely warned to send for Peter.*

10 There was a certain man in Cesarea called Cornelius, a
2 centurion of the band called the Italian *band*, a devout

X. 1—8. CORNELIUS IS DIVINELY WARNED TO SEND FOR PETER.

St Luke now brings to our notice the circumstances which attended the first preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. The Apostles, though informed by Christ's commission that they were to "teach all nations," yet tarried the Lord's leisure, and waited till the Spirit, who was their constant guide, shewed them a door opened for such extension of their labours. The first Gentile converts seem to have been living in some sort of communion with the Jews of Cæsarea, for Cornelius, the representative figure among them, was "of good report among all that nation," but yet from the complaints of the brethren at Jerusalem, when they heard what Peter had done, we can see that Cornelius was one of the "sinners of the Gentiles." "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them" expresses the shock, which the strict observers of the Law experienced in this new development of the Church, and even Peter himself, though chosen to inaugurate the preaching to the Gentiles, was not always proof against the scruples and remonstrances of his brethren of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 12).

1. *There was a certain man in Cesarea*] The oldest MSS. omit the verb *was* here, and make the sentence read, "Now a certain man in Cæsarea...a devout man...which gave much alms...saw in a vision, &c." Cæsarea is the same place which is mentioned viii. 40, and was usually the residence of the Roman Procurator (see xxiii. 23—26, xxv. 1—4). The soldiers over whom Cornelius was centurion were the necessary troops to support the state and authority of the Roman representative, who at this time was Herod Agrippa, whom Claudius had made king over Judæa and Samaria.

called Cornelius] Lit. "Cornelius by name." The name shews he was a Roman, and perhaps he may have been of the famous Cornelian Gens. But there were also many plebeians of this name, for Sulla (Appian *B.C.* i. 100) bestowed the Roman franchise on 10,000 slaves and called them after his own name, "Cornelii."

a centurion] This was not a distinguished office. He was commander of the sixth part of a cohort, i.e. of half a manipule. The name must have been given to such officer when his command was over a *hundred* men. The Roman legion in these times was divided into ten cohorts, and each cohort into three maniples, so that the nominal strength of the legion would be 6000 men.

of the band] i.e. the cohort. Such a troop was stationed in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion (Matt. xxvii. 27).

called the Italian band] The name at first would be given to it from the country in which it was raised, but no doubt it would afterwards be recruited from other parts, and yet still retain its original title. Tacitus (*Hist.* i. 59 &c.) mentions an *Italian* legion. A centurion of a similar band, which was styled "Augustan," is mentioned (xxvii. 1) below.

man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the ³ day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was ⁴ afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for ⁵

2. *a devout man*] i.e. he was a worshipper of the true God, but had not joined himself to the Jews in the observance of the Law. The language of St Peter in *v.* 28 shews us that he was not a complete proselyte. Wherever in the N.T. we find mention made of Roman centurions they appear to have been good men, Matt. viii. 5; Luke vii. 2, xxiii. 47.

and one that feared God with all his house] The earnestness of his devotion to God is evidenced by the character of his household. If his family be here meant, he had instructed them in the worship of God, and had provided that those who attended on him should also be of the same character. The soldier, whom he sends to Peter, is called "devout" in *v.* 7.

which gave much alms to the people] i.e. to the Jewish people among whom he was stationed. He was like the centurion (Luke vii. 5) of whom the Jews said, "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue."

and prayed to God alway] thus shewing himself anxious for greater knowledge of God's way, which from xi. 14 we learn must have been the purport of the prayer of Cornelius.

3. *He saw in a vision evidently* [*openly*] i.e. he was not in a trance, as we read afterwards concerning Peter, but was employed in prayer when the angel appeared. See below, *v.* 30.

about the ninth hour of the day] This was the hour for evening prayer, see iii. 1. So we can see that Cornelius had adopted the Jewish hours of prayer.

4. *And when he looked on him*] Literally, "having fastened his eyes on him." The angel is called (*v.* 30) "a man in bright clothing." Such a sight would rivet the centurion's gaze at the first, and then the heavenly nature of the visitor made itself evident, and he was afraid.

What is it, Lord?] His language expresses his readiness to perform what shall be commanded, and his question implies, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

Thy prayers and thine alms are come [*have gone*] *up*] The idea is that of the prayers, like incense, when offered ascending up to God. Cp. Rev. viii. 3, 4, also *v.* 8, "vials full of odours which are the prayers of saints." Cf. Ps. cxli. 2.

for a memorial before God] They have been such as to be remembered before God, and now He is about to answer them. The portion of the meal offering which the priest was commanded to burn upon the altar to be an offering of a sweet savour unto the Lord (Lev. ii. 2) was

6 *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one
 7 Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell
 thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which
 spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his
 household servants, and a devout soldier of them that
 8 waited on him continually; and when he had declared all
these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9—16. *Peter is prepared for their visit by a Vision.*

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew
 nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house to pray

called a "memorial," and the allusion is to the offerings of this kind. Cp. the words of the angel (Tobit xii. 12), "I did bring the *remembrance* of your prayers before the Holy One," where the Greek word for "remembrance" is that which is here rendered "memorial."

6. *he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*] These words are not in the oldest MSS. In Peter's own account of the visit to Cornelius (xi. 14) we have "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved;" and this is one of the numerous instances found in some later texts of the Acts where an attempt has been made to form a complete narrative in the earlier chapters by gathering together and adapting statements which appear in their proper place in later chapters. The prayers of Cornelius had been for more knowledge and greater light, and the angel directs him to the instructor whom he desires. The inserted words probably first appeared as a note on the margin.

7. *And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius [him] was departed*] The proper name does not appear in the oldest MSS. When the additional note on the last verse had found its way into the text, the name of Cornelius was placed instead of the pronoun for greater clearness. The reality of the angelic presence is strongly marked by these words which speak of his going away from the sight of Cornelius as any human being would have departed.

a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually] Better, "of them that attended on him." The soldier was attached to the personal service of Cornelius in the same way as that in which the soldiers were under that other centurion (Luke vii. 8) who could say to one, "Go," and he was obeyed.

8. *And when he had declared all these things unto them*] Omit "these" which is not in the Greek. The confidence which Cornelius placed in those who attended on him is shewn by this open communication with them at once on the subject of his vision. They had known all his former hopes and prayers, and so were fit persons to be made sharers in what seemed to be the answer.

9—16. PETER IS PREPARED FOR THEIR VISIT BY A VISION.

9. *Peter went up upon the house*] With the flat roofs of Eastern

about the sixth hour: and he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as *it had been* a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all *manner of* fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts,

houses, to which access could be obtained from outside without passing through the rooms of the building, the housetop formed a convenient place for retirement. It was the place chosen by Samuel (1 Sam. ix. 25—26) for his conference with Saul before he anointed him king. Cp. also 2 Sam. xi. 2.

to pray] We find that the housetop was used for religious purposes (Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5). These instances are of worship paid to false gods, but if the one worship, we may believe that the other also was performed there.

about the sixth hour] i.e. midday, and the second of the Jewish stated hours of prayer. We see from vv. 23 and 24 that the journey from Joppa to Caesarea occupied more than one day, so that the vision of Cornelius took place on the day before the trance of St Peter and the messengers had time almost to accomplish their journey before the Apostle, by his vision, was prepared to receive them. The distance between the two places was 30 Roman miles.

10. *he fell into a trance*] So that the vision was seen by him only mentally, when he was rapt out of the body, and beheld all things as a man in a dream.

11. *and saw [beholdeth] heaven opened*] To shew him that the teaching of the vision was sent to him from God.

and a certain vessel descending unto him] The oldest MSS. omit the two last words.

as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth] The oldest MSS. only give "a great sheet let down by four corners upon the earth." The word rendered "corners" is used of the "end of a cord" in Herod. iv. 60, but it seems that for such a sense there must be added either a noun or adjective for explanation. What the Apostle saw was an extended sheet, the four corners of which were held up as it were by cords let down from the four extremities of the opened sky. The significance of the outstretched sheet, as a figure of the wide world, and the four corners as the directions into which the gospel was now to be borne forth into all the world, has often been dwelt upon.

12. *wherein were*] i.e. appeared to be in the vision.

all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts] The oldest MSS. omit the last six words. They have been inserted here that the text might more exactly correspond with what St Peter says in xi. 6 (see note on v. 6). The vision represented the whole animal creation. There were in it living creatures typical of each kind, not a multitude of the same sort of birds and beasts.

¹³ and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came
¹⁴ a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not
 so, Lord; for I have never eaten any *thing that is* common or
¹⁵ unclean. And *the voice spake* unto him again the second
 time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.
¹⁶ This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up
 again into heaven.

13. *Rise, Peter; kill, and eat*] As he was hungry before he fell into the trance, here is presented the means of satisfying his hunger, and by the command in which he is directed to kill without distinction among all that he sees, this divinely-communicated abrogation of the law of Moses concerning the choice among living creatures afterwards informs his waking mind that now all the nations are to be alike included among God's people.

14. *Not so, Lord*] Cp. Ezek. iv. 14, where the prophet being shewn that the children of Israel shall eat defiled bread among the Gentiles, exclaims in words very like St Peter's: "There never came abominable flesh into my mouth." For the care with which the devout Jew observed the ceremonial distinction between clean and unclean, see Dan. i. 8—12; 2 Macc. vi. 18.

common or unclean] The oldest authorities read "common and unclean." The use of "common" in the sense of impure according to the Mosaic ritual is, as were the ordinances about which this language was employed, peculiar to the Jews. But it is easy to trace the steps by which the word came to be used thus. All persons who were not Jews were viewed as the "common" rabble, shut out from God's covenant, then whatever practices of these outcasts differed from those of the chosen people were called "common" things, and as these "common" things were those forbidden by the Law, all such prohibited things or actions became known as "common." Cp. Mark vii. 2, where the margin explains that "*defiled hands*" is in the original "*common hands*."

15. *And the [a] voice spake unto him again the second time*] coming from heaven as the first voice had come. There is no verb in the original, and it would perhaps be better to supply "came" rather than "spake."

What God hath cleansed, that call [make] not thou common] The heaven-sent voice revokes what had been enjoined from heaven at the giving of the Law. The power which made the restriction can remove it. That it would be removed Christ had intimated (Matt. xv. 11), "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man." The old dispensation is now to give place to the new, and Peter is taught by the vision that men are not to make such distinctions and separations for themselves. "For meat destroy not the work of God" (Rom. xiv. 20).

16. *This was done thrice*] The original has a conjunction "And" at the commencement of the sentence.

The repetition of the vision three times over was made that no doubt might remain in the Apostle's mind, and the reception of the whole into

17—24. *Arrival of the Messengers from Cornelius: Peter goes with them to Cæsarea.*

Now while Peter doubted in himself what *this* vision ¹⁷ which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, and called, and asked ¹⁸ whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said ¹⁹ unto him, Behold, three men seek thee: arise therefore, and ²⁰ get *thee* down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I

heaven again was designed to point out that it was a lesson which God had as directly sent as of old He sent the Law on Sinai. Cp. the repetition of Pharaoh's dream (Gen. xli. 32) and Joseph's explanation thereof. Peter would also remember when he came out of his trance the thrice-repeated charge given to him by Jesus (John xxi. 15—17), "Feed my sheep."

17—24. ARRIVAL OF THE MESSENGERS FROM CORNELIUS: PETER GOES WITH THEM TO CÆSAREA.

17. *Now while Peter doubted (was much perplexed) in himself*] The original verb implies "to be thoroughly at a loss, and not know which way to turn." It is used (Luke ix. 7) of Herod's perplexity about Christ, when men said that John the Baptist was risen from the dead. Peter, aroused from his trance, was to apply what he had seen and heard, but he knew not how to begin the work.

stood before the gate] Literally, *at the porch*. The position of the house had been described to Cornelius (v. 6), and when his messengers found the details true, it must have given them confidence that their errand was to be a successful one.

18. *and called*] i.e. on some one within the house to come forth. These messengers, like Cornelius himself, were most probably Gentiles, and so might not feel justified in entering a Jewish house without giving notice of their presence.

19. *While Peter thought on the vision*] The original has a conjunction "Now" at the beginning of this verse.

Peter was turning over his difficulty in his mind, and asking what God would have him learn by this lesson about the abolition of differences in meats. And while he was thus pondering the explanation came.

the Spirit said unto him] Thus the arrival of the three men was, by the inward admonition of the Spirit, connected with his vision.

three men] The two servants and the soldier whom Cornelius had sent (v. 7).

20. *get thee down*] Peter was still on the housetop.

doubting nothing] The oldest texts give the verb here in the middle voice, as in Jas. i. 6, "nothing wavering," but in the parallel passage,

21 have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore
 22 ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to
 23 hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and
 24 certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the

xi. 12, it is active, and signifies "making no distinction," i.e. between Jew and Gentile. The latter was used by the Apostle when events had taught him precisely what the vision and the spiritual exhortation meant. The Spirit's teaching is given little by little as Christ had told His disciples that it should be, "He shall *guide* you (lit. lead you on the way) unto all truth" (John xvi. 13). The vision had given no hint of a journey to be taken; now Peter is informed of it, and so too when the end of the journey is reached the "nothing wavering" is shewn to mean "putting no distinction between Jews and other men," and thus the vision was made intelligible little by little and the perplexity removed.

21. *Then (And) Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius*] The last seven words are not in the oldest Greek texts, and are clearly an addition of later date to make the text quite clear.

22. *of good report among all the nation of the Jews*] For the alms-deeds which he did, and on account of his reverence for the true God. They say not only among the people of Cæsarea was the piety of Cornelius known, but among all the Jews.

was warned from God] There is no Greek for "from God," but the verb is one constantly used of messages from above. Thus of Joseph's warnings (Matt. ii. 12, 22), of Simeon's Divine revelation (Luke ii. 26), and of the admonitions sent to Moses (Heb. viii. 5), and to Noah (Heb. xi. 7).

to hear words of thee] i.e. to receive commandments from thee and learn what God would have him to do (cp. xi. 14). By the Jews the ten commandments are constantly called "the ten words," "God spake these words, saying," &c. (Exod. xx. 1).

23. *Then called he them in, and lodged them*] This was the first step towards laying aside the scruples to which the Jews were so much attached.

And on the morrow Peter went away with them] The best texts read "And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them."

and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him] In xi. 12 we are told they were *six* in number, and in v. 45 of this chapter they are called "they of the circumcision which believed." So these men were

morrow *after* they entered into ²⁵Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25—33. *Arrival of Peter. Cornelius explains why he had sent for him.*

And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell ²⁵down at *his* feet, and worshipped *him*. But Peter took him ²⁶up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he ²⁷talked with him, he went in, and found many *that were*

Jews, and Peter took them for his companions that he might, if need were, afterwards appeal to them for testimony of what was done, and to explain why he had acted as he did. No doubt they were informed by him of the message which the servants of Cornelius had brought, and the good repute of this devout man would weigh with them and make them ready to go.

24. *And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea*] Their road lay all the way along the coast, and as Apollonia was situate about halfway between Joppa and Caesarea, it is most likely that they passed the night there.

And Cornelius waited (was waiting) for them] His attitude of preparation shews how convinced he was of the reality of his vision, and that God was about to give him an answer to his prayers.

his kinsmen and near friends] These we can hardly doubt were men of like mind with Cornelius in their faith and worship, and so had naturally been told of the answer which he was expecting, and invited to be present when Peter arrived.

25—33. ARRIVAL OF PETER. CORNELIUS EXPLAINS WHY HE HAD SENT FOR HIM.

25. *And as Peter was coming in*] The Greek is literally, "And as it came to pass that Peter entered," i.e. before he went in, for we read of his entrance in v. 27.

worshipped him] paying him the religious reverence which the supernatural direction of the angel concerning Peter would be likely to prompt. This act of obeisance in the Roman officer marks most strongly his sense that Peter was God's messenger. Such acts were not usual among Roman soldiers.

26. *But Peter took (raised) him up*] Cp. with the way in which Peter here declines to permit such reverence, the way in which the angel (Rev. xix. 10) refused such worship, "See thou do it not. I am thy fellowservant."

27. *And as he talked with him, he went in*] So that the previous part of the interview had been without. The action of Cornelius in thus coming forth to meet Peter is in the spirit of that other centurion in

²⁸ come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful *thing* for a man *that is* a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that *I* should not call any man common or ²⁹unclean. Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent

the Gospel, who said (Luke vii. 6), "I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof." The Greek word here rendered "talked" indicates the communication made during an interview of some length. The subsequent remarks of St Peter shew us that he had been told many things by Cornelius, which are not specially mentioned, but comprehended under this word "talked."

and found (*findeth*) many, &c.] For the character of Cornelius had won him many attached friends.

28. *Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing, &c.*] It is said expressly by Maimonides, *Hilechoth Rozeakh*, &c. XII. 7, "It is forbidden to a Jew to be alone with heathens, because they are suspected of (lightly) shedding blood, nor must he associate with them on the road." And in the *Midrash Rabbah* on Leviticus, cap. 20 (*ad fin.*), there is an interesting example of the sort of ceremonial defilement which association with the heathen might bring about, "It happened that Shimeon the son of Kimkhith (who was high-priest) went out to speak with the King of the Arabians, and there came a flock of spittle from the King's mouth upon the priest's garment and so he was unclean; and his brother Judah went in and served instead of him in the high-priest's office. That day their mother saw two of her sons high-priests." The Apostle speaks of the prohibition as a thing well known to those who heard him, and the action of the messengers of Cornelius in standing outside the house of Simon and calling out some one to question in the open air shews that they were aware of the dislike of the Jews to associate with Gentiles. We have evidence that this dislike was well known wherever the Jews resided from the words of Juvenal (xiv. 103), "Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti." So Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 5), "separati epulis, discreti cubilibus."

to keep company] Lit. "to join himself." The word is the same as in the command to Philip (viii. 29), "Go near and *join thyself* to this chariot;" and signifies intimate intercourse. The ordinary dealings of life must constantly have forced Jews to be in the company of Gentiles, but it was to be avoided if possible.

but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean] The Spirit's command "Go with them doubting nothing, for I have sent them" has taught Peter how he is to interpret the figure shewn to him in his vision.

29. *without gainsaying*] Following in faith the guidance of the Spirit, though I only saw dimly what God would have me to do.

ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I³⁰ was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine³¹ alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send³² therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast³³ well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all *things* that are commanded thee of God.

34—43. *Speech of Peter to Cornelius and his friends.*

Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I³⁴ perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every³⁵ nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which *God* sent unto the³⁶

30. *Four days ago I was fasting untill his hour, &c.*] The oldest MSS. have "Four days ago until this hour I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house." This makes the time of Peter's arrival to be after the ninth hour of the day. The prayer-service to which Cornelius refers had begun and been continued for some time before the appearance of the angel.

in bright clothing] See above, i. 10, note.

32. *who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee*] These words are not in the oldest MSS., though they are found in some very good authorities.

33. *to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*] The oldest authorities read "of the Lord." In "hear" there is implied the intention to obey. For the words which the centurion expected to hear from Peter were words "whereby he and all his house might be saved."

34—43. SPEECH OF PETER TO CORNELIUS AND HIS FRIENDS.

34. *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons*] i.e. I am now fully convinced, from what I have heard of God's angel appearing to Cornelius and from the connection of that vision with my own, that God is making Himself known to all the workers of righteousness whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

35. *is accepted with him*] i.e. is acceptable unto Him. God has no longer a chosen people, but calleth all men to repent, and will accept them.

children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ : (he is
 37 Lord of all:) *that word, I say, you know*, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after
 38 the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were
 39 oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we

36. *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)]* The construction and meaning of this and the two following verses are somewhat involved. The relative "which" is left out of this verse by the oldest MSS., and "God" is not represented in the Greek. So that the literal translation would be, "He (i.e. God, mentioned in the previous verse) sent the word unto the children of Israel, preaching the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all). The "word" in this verse is the message of the Messiah proclaimed by angels (Luke ii. 14) as a message of glad tidings, and of peace on earth, through the birth of a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. This was first preached unto Israel as God's chosen people, but now God is the giver of remission of sins to every one that believeth on Him (see v. 43). The message of peace now was not only to be between God and the chosen race, but between God and the Jew and Gentile alike.

37. *that word, I say, you know]* Better, "ye know the tidings." The Greek rendered "word" here is not the same which is so translated in the previous verse. The former refers to the whole message of salvation through Christ, the latter to the tidings about Jesus which had gone abroad after the preaching of John the Baptist. These tidings Peter either assumes Cornelius and his friends to know because of the teaching which had already extended as far as Cæsarea (viii. 40), or else he has learnt that they have this knowledge about the facts of the life of Jesus from the conversation which he held with the centurion at his first arrival. Hence he says "ye know of the history of Jesus."

began from Galilee] where Christ's ministerial life commenced. See Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14.

38. *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth]* It seems better to take the name "Jesus of Nazareth" as in apposition with the tidings mentioned in the previous verse, making the connection thus: Ye know the tidings, &c., "even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him," &c. This is the whole scope of what was preached, that Jesus had lived as a man in Nazareth, but yet had been God's Anointed, the Messiah, and shewn to be so by the mighty works which He did.

healing all that were oppressed of the devil] This is perhaps mentioned as shewing that the power of Jesus was to be not only over physical but over moral evil likewise, and this alone is mentioned because in the healing of the greater, the power to cure the less evil is implied.

for God was with him] As Nicodemus confessed, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John iii. 2).

are witnesses of all *things* which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and shewed ⁴⁰ him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses ⁴¹ chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded ⁴² us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through ⁴³

39. *And we are witnesses of all things*] Because they had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministerial life (Luke xxiv. 48).

whom they slew and hanged on a tree] Rather (with the oldest MSS.) “whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree.” For the latter part of the expression cp. v. 30 note.

40. *him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly* (**gave him to be made manifest**)] The literal translation implies more than the A. V. Christ was not openly shewed, but by many proofs it was made clear to those who saw Him that it was the same body, even though now glorified, which had been wounded on the cross, that was alive again.

41. *not to all the people*] For they, having rejected Moses and the prophets, who foretold Christ's coming, and the nature of His Kingdom, were not likely, as Jesus Himself had said of some others of like character, to be converted by the rising of any one from the dead.

witnesses chosen before of God] Christ Himself speaks (John xvii. 6) of the Apostles as given unto Him by God.

even to us] Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 6—8.

who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead] See Luke xxiv. 42, 43. And in the narrative John xxi. 12—15 it is to be inferred, especially from the last verse, that Jesus Himself partook of the food which He gave to the rest.

42. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people*] This was among the commandments alluded to Acts i. 2. Compare the charge given by Christ, Matt. xxviii. 19, where the wide commission “Go ye, teach all nations,” is one that anticipated the preaching of the Gospel not only to Cornelius, but to all other Gentiles.

that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead] Cp. Christ's words to the Jews (John v. 22, 27), “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” “and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”

43. *To him give all the prophets witness*] Cp. Isa. xlix. 6, “I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Also Joel ii. 32, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” So that under the Law the redemption of the Gentiles was seen afar off. The way in which St Peter

his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44—48. *The Holy Ghost is sent upon Cornelius and his friends, and they are baptized.*

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell
 45 on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured
 46 out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered
 47 Peter, Can any *man* forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as
 48 we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

uses the Jewish Scriptures to enforce his arguments is an evidence that Cornelius and his household were familiar with those writings.

44—48. THE HOLY GHOST IS SENT UPON CORNELIUS AND HIS FRIENDS, AND THEY ARE BAPTIZED.

45. *they of the circumcision*] The six Jewish Christians mentioned in xi. 12 as companions of St Peter.

46. *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God*] The same kind of manifestation of God's gifts was here made as in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. See ii. 11.

47. *Can any man forbid water, &c.*] Though the gift of the Spirit has been made so apparent, yet St Peter does not omit the outward sign which Christ had ordained (Matt. xxviii. 19) for the admission of members into His Church.

as well as we] Thus does he recognize that God had chosen Gentiles as well as Jews, and given the same grace to each.

48. *And he commanded them to be baptized*] Peter seems to have refrained from baptizing converts, and we know that St Paul did so, and the latter indicates a reason which may have influenced all the twelve to appoint others to baptize, lest factions should arise, and men sever the Christian unity by calling themselves by the name of some one of the Apostles. Cp. 1 Cor. i. 13—16.

in the name of the Lord] The oldest MSS. have "in the name of Jesus Christ."

Then prayed they him to tarry certain days] It is probable that Peter consented to stay (see xi. 3), and thus shewed that he was prepared to act according to the teaching of the vision. We know that afterwards (Gal. ii. 11—13) he wavered in his determination, and was rebuked by St Paul for so doing; but even the account of that rebuke shews us that Peter had laid aside his Jewish prejudices in a great degree, and had

1—18. *The Judæo-Christians blame Peter. He makes his defence at Jerusalem.*

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard ¹¹ that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And ² when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest ³

only acted, in the way which was blamed, through the influence of some still strict Jews who had come from Jerusalem to Antioch. St Luke is not to be supposed to be ignorant of that wavering action of St Peter because he does not mention it. For a similar Christian reticence, in a like case, see xiii. 13 and note there.

XI. 1—18. THE JUDÆO-CHRISTIANS BLAME PETER. HE MAKES HIS DEFENCE AT JERUSALEM.

1. *the apostles and brethren...heard*] The news reached them before the return of St Peter to Jerusalem.

that the Gentiles had also received the word of God] At this news, had there been no additional information about Peter's eating with Cornelius, the disciples would have rejoiced, and would have welcomed this further spread of the word, as they did (viii. 14) the conversion of the Samaritans, but to some, who were not only Christians, but strict observers of Jewish ritual, it was a cause of offence that Peter had consented to become the guest of a Gentile.

2. *they that were of the circumcision*] This must have been the whole Church, at the time when the event occurred, for there were no Christians as yet except Jews and proselytes, but St Luke's narrative was compiled at a time when "they that were of the circumcision" had become a distinct party, and when their influence had begun to work division in the Christian societies. He therefore employs a name which when he wrote was full of significance, although it had its origin only in the circumstances to which he here applies it. Those who had been born Jews and knew of Jesus as conforming to the Law, and who had not heard of Peter's vision nor seen the gift of the Holy Ghost to Cornelius and his friends, as those who had been with Peter had done, were to be pardoned, if their scruples caused them to question the conduct of the Apostle at this time; yet when they heard his story they were satisfied (see v. 18), but many Jewish Christians elsewhere continued to make this subject a cause of contention. See xv. 1.

contended with him] The verb is a very significant one. It is the same that is used with a negative in x. 20, xi. 12, "nothing doubting," and xv. 9, "making no difference." The thought of these men who contended was that the difference between Jew and Gentile should still be maintained, and that any close fellowship (such as was involved in living at the same board) with those who accepted Christianity otherwise than through the gate of submission to the Mosaic Law, should be avoided. As the Jews in Cæsarea had (x. 22) behaved towards Cornelius, before he became a Christian, so would the Judaizing feeling have prompted

4 in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter *rehearsed the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as *it had been* a great sheet, let down from
6 heaven by four corners; and it came *even* to me: upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and
7 creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice
8 saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any
9 time entered into my mouth. But *the* voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not
10 thou common. And this was done three times: and all
11 were drawn up again into heaven. And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house
12 where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the

the Church of Christ to deal with him still. And when we think on the prejudice which, by generations of ceremonial observance, had grown up among the Jews, we cannot wonder greatly at what they did. A whole nation is not brought to a change of feeling in a day.

3. *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised*] The expression shews the strength of feeling against what Peter had done. The men with whom he had mixed are not called Gentiles, but the uncircumcised, the word of greatest reproach in the mouth of a Jew.

and didst eat with them] Among men with whom there would be no regard to the character of the food, nor to the way in which it was prepared.

4. *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them*] Better, "But Peter began and rehearsed the matter in order unto them."

6. *I considered*] Better, "I beheld."

11. *And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was*] With the oldest MSS. read, "And behold immediately three men stood before the house in which **we were**."

12. *nothing doubting*] The oldest MSS. give "making no difference." On this change of the verb from the middle to the active voice, and for a reason why Peter, after having been at Cæsarea and having heard the statement of Cornelius and seen the gift of the Spirit, adopted this form in his address at Jerusalem, see x. 20 note.

Moreover [And] these six brethren accompanied me] Those who had been his companions to Cæsarea were brought by Peter to Jerusalem,

man's house : and he shewed us how he had seen an angel ¹³
in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to
Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter ; who ¹⁴
shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall
be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell ¹⁵
on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered ¹⁶
I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed
baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the
Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like ¹⁷
gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus
Christ ; what was I, that I could withstand God ? When ¹⁸
they heard these *things*, they held their peace, and glorified
God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted
repentance unto life.

that their testimony might support his statement, and that they might declare to the Church what they had seen. The change in the number of the verb in v. 11, "we were" for "I was," which has the support of the best MSS., makes it probable that these brethren were his companions in the journey which he was making "throughout all quarters" (ix. 32), and so were lodging with him at Simon's house in Joppa.

13. *and he shewed us how he had seen an angel*] The Greek has "and he related to us how he had seen *the* angel." Before St Peter made this defence, and long before St Luke put it down in the Acts, the story of Cornelius and his vision would be well known, and so the definite article would be used in speaking of it, i. e. "*the* angel" of whom all men had heard.

said unto him] The oldest MSS. omit the last two words.

Send men to Joppa] "Men" is omitted in the best MSS. This is one of the numerous insertions by which a repetition of a narrative in this book has been brought into exact verbal accord with the previous form. There have been times when devout men thought much of this verbal accord. It is therefore worth notice that the writers of the N. T. disregarded it utterly. The words in such a solemn inscription as that above the Cross differ in all the four Gospels, and St Peter, when in the Second Epistle (i. 17) he speaks of the heavenly voice heard at the Transfiguration, varies verbally from each of the accounts of the Evangelists.

15. *at the beginning*] i. e. at the feast of Pentecost.

16. *the word of the Lord*] Recorded above, i. 5.

17. *who believed*] The words refer alike to "them" and to "us," and so the two cases are made parallel, as in v. 15. For just as in the case of Peter and the Apostles, their faith was existing before the gift of the Spirit, so in Cornelius and in his companions there existed a degree of faith, or there could have been no sincere prayer offered by them.

18. *they held their peace*] But though those who heard the account of St Peter were satisfied that God had called Gentiles as well as Jews,

19—26. *Further spread of the Gospel as far as Antioch.*

- 19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecu-
 tion that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice,
 and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but
 20 unto *the* Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus
 and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake
 21 unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the
 hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number be-

there were others who, some perhaps with a real but misguided zeal for the Law, some, as St Paul says (Gal. vi. 13), from vain-glory, maintained the necessity for the observance of the older covenant, and hence arose dissensions in the Church from a very early time.

19—26. FURTHER SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AS FAR AS ANTIOCH.

19. *about Stephen*] See above, viii. 1.

as far as Phenice [*Phœnicia*] The district in which were the important towns of Tyre and Sidon. See *Dictionary of the Bible*.

Antioch] The capital city of Syria, about 16 miles from the sea-coast, on the river Orontes. It was the residence of the Roman pro-consul of Syria. St Paul made this his starting-point in all his three missionary journeys. For its history see *Dictionary of the Bible*.

unto the Jews only] For they had not been warned, as Peter was, that the time was come to carry out Christ's prophetic command (Acts i. 8) to its fullest extent.

20. *And* [*But*] *some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene*] in whose minds, from their more cosmopolitan education, there was less scruple about mixing with Gentiles than existed among the Jews of Palestine, the home of the nation, and by consequence the stronghold of their prejudices.

spake unto the Grecians] The best MSS. have *Greeks*, and this is clearly the correct reading. The N.T. uses *Hellenistæ*=Grecians, to mean those Jews who had been born abroad and spoke the Greek language, or else for proselytes, but *Hellenes*=Greeks, when the heathen population is spoken of. Now it is clear that it would have been no matter of remark had these men preached to Greek-Jews, for of them there was a large number in the Church of Jerusalem, as we see from the events related in chap. vi. 1, and most probably these Grecian and Cyprian teachers were themselves Greek-Jews; but what calls for special mention by St Luke is that they, moved perhaps by some spiritual impulse, addressed their preaching in Antioch to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

21. *And the hand of the Lord was with them*] The expression is a common one in the O.T. to express the direct interposition of God in the affairs of the world. Cp. Exod. xiv. 31, "And Israel saw that great work [*Heb. hand*] which the Lord did upon the Egyptians." So the Egyptian magicians (Exod. viii. 19), "This is the finger of God."

lieved, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these ²² *things* came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that *he* should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen ²³ the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted *them* all, that with purpose of heart *they* would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and ²⁴

22. *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem*] Better more literally, "And the report concerning them, &c.," i.e. concerning these Gentile converts. These events took place, and were known to the Church in Jerusalem, before they heard of the visit of Peter to Cornelius. But what had happened at Antioch caused the Church no disturbance, because we read of no such breaking through the restrictions of the ceremonial Law as was made in Cæsarea when Peter took up his abode with Cornelius. The Jewish preachers mingled no further with the Gentiles to whom they preached at Antioch than the intercourse of everyday life forced them to do constantly.

and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch] The oldest MSS. omit "that he should go." He was sent forth, as Peter and John before had been sent into Samaria (viii. 14), to confirm and give the sanction and direction of the mother Church to the work which had begun at a new centre. Barnabas being a native of Cyprus would most likely be well known to the Cyprians who were preaching at Antioch, and so he was a most fit person to be selected for this errand.

23. *and had seen the grace of God*] exhibited in the faith, and consequent turning to Christ, of these Gentiles.

was glad] He saw nothing in the new movement which could call for disapproval, and that more members should be added to the Church was a source of joy.

and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart (in the purpose of their heart) *they would cleave unto the Lord*] Their determination was at present formed, and they had turned to the Lord; the purport of Barnabas' exhortation was that continuing in the same determination they should hold fast their faith and allow nothing to shake their attachment to Christ. The heathen converts to Christianity had much to endure for Christ's sake, and to the weak there were many temptations to relapse.

24. *full of the Holy Ghost and of faith*] The same character is given to Stephen (vi. 5), and a man of like character with that most eminent among the Greek-Jews would exert much influence in Antioch, where Greeks and Greek-Jews were the chief part of the population. It was in consequence of the persecution after Stephen's death that these preachers had come to Antioch, and some of them were probably of those Grecians who had been forward in the work for which Stephen was martyred.

of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.
²⁵ Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: and
²⁶ when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27—30. *Agabus at Antioch foretells a famine, and in consequence the Church at Antioch sends relief to Jerusalem.*

²⁷ And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto
and much people was added unto the Lord] The sanction of the Church of Jerusalem to what had been done, as it was given by the joy and encouraging words of the "Son of Consolation," would quicken the zeal of these already earnest labourers for Christ.

25. *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus]* The oldest MSS. omit "Barnabas." Read, "And he went forth to Tarsus."

for to seek Saul] that he, to whom the Lord had appeared, and who had been marked as a "chosen vessel" (ix. 15) to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles, might come with him to share in this new work of preaching to the Gentiles at Antioch.

26. *a whole year]* This long period, spent with success in the first field where the preaching to the Gentiles had begun, will account for the constant return to Antioch after each missionary journey of the Apostle of the Gentiles. He had preached at Damascus and at Jerusalem, but it was always with his life in his hand. At Antioch he first found a quiet Church with a wide scope for all his earnestness.

and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch] It is most probable that this name was given them by the heathen in ridicule. The disciples of Jesus never give it to themselves, and as the use of it would imply that those who bore it were the followers of the Messiah, the Christ, it is certain it would not be given to them by the Jews. The reason for a new distinctive term is apparent. When these new Gentile converts were joined to the Church of Antioch, none of the former distinctive appellations would embrace the whole body. They were no longer all Nazarenes or Galilæans or Greek-Jews, and as to the people of Antioch they probably seemed a strange medley, they would not be unlikely to apply to them such a hybrid form as "Christian," a Greek word with a Latin termination. The name is probably used in mockery by Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 28), "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian," but in the only other and later instance of the use of the name in the N. T. (1 Pet. iv. 16) we can see that what had been at first a taunt had soon come to be a name in which to glory, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."

27—30. AGABUS AT ANTIOCH FORETELLS A FAMINE, AND IN CONSEQUENCE THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH SENDS RELIEF TO JERUSALEM.

27. *And in these days]* i.e. while the Church at Antioch was being

Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, ²⁸ and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar. Then the disciples, every man accord- ²⁹ ing to his ability, determined to send relief unto the

increased with a great multitude of Gentile converts, during the year's residence there of Barnabas and Saul.

came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch] That there should be prophets in the Church was but the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel which Peter had quoted in his Pentecostal sermon (ii. 17). We cannot gather from the N. T. records any clear description of what office is to be understood by the word "prophet." The men to whom it is applied are sometimes occupied in preaching and explaining the Word of God, and sometimes have the power of foretelling future events, as Agabus did here. See Acts xiii. 1, xv. 32, xix. 6, xxi. 9, 10; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29, xiii. 2, 8, xiv. 6, 29—37.

28. *one of them named Agabus*] He is mentioned again xxi. 10, where by a significant action, as well as by his words, he foretells the imprisonment of St Paul at Jerusalem.

and signified by the Spirit] So too xxi. 11, the words of Agabus are, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle."

great dearth] This famine is mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 2. 5), who tells how Helena, queen of Adiabene, being at Jerusalem, succoured the people by procuring for them corn from Alexandria and a cargo of figs from Cyprus. The date of this severe famine was A. D. 45.

throughout all the world] Though one region might be specially afflicted by the failure of its crops, all the rest of the Roman empire would be sure to suffer in some degree at the same time, and especially when famines were, as at this time, of frequent recurrence.

in the days of Claudius Cesar] The oldest MSS. omit "Cæsar." The reign of Claudius (A.D. 41—54) was remarkable for the famines with which various parts of the empire were afflicted. The first, second, fourth, ninth and eleventh years of this Emperor's reign are recorded as years of famine in some district or other. See Suetonius, *Claudius*, 28; Tacitus, *Ann.* xii. 43; Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 2. 5, Dio Cassius ix. p. 949, Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 8.

29. *Then the disciples*] i.e. of the Church of Antioch.

relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea] No doubt the Christian Church in Judæa would be much impoverished. At first the poorer converts had been sustained by the common fund, but persecution had driven away great numbers of the Christians, and those would be most likely to depart who possessed means to support themselves in other places. Thus the mother-church would be deprived of those members who were best able to give relief in such a severe time of distress.

30. *to the elders*] The Greek word = *presbyters*. This is the first time we come upon the term in the Christian history. In xx. 17 they are again

- 30 brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

1—12. *Herod's persecution of the Church. Peter's miraculous deliverance from prison.*

- 12 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his*
 2 hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James
 3 the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw

mentioned and there called "presbyters," though in the same narrative (v. 28) they are termed "overseers," *episcopoi*, i.e. bishops. No doubt at first the office of elder or presbyter comprised, beside the work of teaching, the general oversight of one, or it may be more, Churches. As the Church increased in numbers these duties were separated and the general superintendence and control assigned to one who was called overseer or bishop.

by the hands of Barnabas and Saul] The character and labours of these had marked them out as the most fit men to be bearers of this help, and it was from Jerusalem that Barnabas had been sent at first to Antioch.

XII. 1—12. HEROD'S PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH.
 PETER'S MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM PRISON.

1. *Now about that time]* The events here narrated must have shortly preceded Herod's death, and so the chronological note here given must refer to some date near A.D. 43.

Herod the king] This was Herod Agrippa I. He was the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great. See *Dictionary of the Bible*.

stretched forth his hands to vex (injure) certain of the church] Agrippa, according to Josephus (XIX. 7. 3), was anxious to be esteemed a devout Jew: "He loved to live continually at Jerusalem, and was exactly careful in the observance of the laws of his country. He therefore kept himself entirely pure, nor did any day pass over his head without its appointed sacrifice." Such a man might easily be roused, by the Jews whom he was so anxious to please, to the perpetration of cruelties upon the Christians.

2. *And he killed James the brother of John]* One of the two sons of Zebedee, who had been among the three specially favoured disciples of Jesus. It is therefore likely that he would take a leading part in the labours of the Church, and so Agrippa's attention would be drawn to him as a proper person to be first struck down. All the accusations which had been laid against Stephen, that the Christian leader spake against the Temple and the Law, would be used with effect to such a zealous observer of Mosaic ritual as Herod Agrippa was.

with the sword] This was the third in order of the modes of execution appointed among the Jews. These are stoning, burning, decapitation,

it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter there- 5

and strangulation. In connection with the execution of James the words of the Mishna are interesting: "The manner of putting to death by the sword is as follows: the man's head is cut off with the sword as is wont to be done *by royal command*." See Surenhusius on *Sanhedrin* p. 238 (misprinted 248), where there is a discussion about the position of the prisoner, whether he should stand erect or have his head on a block.

3. *And because he saw it pleased the Jews*] Which was so great an object with him. This Josephus notices (*Antiq.* xix. 7. 3), for, comparing Agrippa with the Herod who ruled before him, he mentions that the latter "was more friendly to the Greeks than to the Jews," in which matter he says Agrippa "was not at all like him."

he proceeded further to take Peter also] The Greek is a rendering of a common Hebrew form. Literally, "*he added to take Peter also*." Peter was the other most conspicuous figure among the twelve, for John, as in his Gospel he keeps himself from view under the designation "that other disciple" (John xx. 2, 3, xxi. 20, 23), so in the work of the early Church he is but little noticed after the first persecution at Jerusalem.

Then were the days of unleavened bread] Literally, "and those were," &c. The expression refers to the whole feast, as may be seen from Luke xxii. 1, "The feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Pass-over."

4. *And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison*] To keep him a prisoner till the termination of the feast.

and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep [guard] *him*] A quaternion was a set of four men, which number was at one time occupied in the work of the guard, two soldiers being chained to the prisoner, and two keeping guard outside. These latter are called (*v.* 10) "the first and second ward." There were four such sets appointed to have charge of Peter, one company for each of the four watches by day and by night.

intending after Easter (the Passover)] The rendering "Easter" is an attempt to give by an English word the notion of the whole feast. That this meaning and not the single day of the Paschal feast is intended by the Greek seems clear from the elaborate preparation made, as for a longer imprisonment than was the rule among the Jews. Peter was arrested at the commencement of the Passover feast (14th of Nisan), and the king's intention was to proceed to sentence and punish him when the feast was at an end on the 21st of Nisan.

to bring him forth to the people] that they might take notice of the zeal for Judaism which would be shewn by the sentence passed upon Peter. The verb is employed by St Luke about the trial of Jesus (Luke xxii. 66), "As soon as it was day... they *led him into* their council."

fore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without
 6 ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod
 would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was
 sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and
 7 *the* keepers before the door kept the prison. And behold,
the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in
 the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him
 up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from
 8 *his* hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and

5. *Peter therefore was kept in prison*] Another indication of the longer duration of the imprisonment, and that he was not arrested on the day of the Paschal sacrifice with the purpose of being brought forth on the morning of the 15th of Nisan, as some have maintained.

but prayer was made without ceasing [earnestly] of the church unto God for him] The same Greek word is used in the description of our Lord's prayer (Luke xxii. 44), "Being in an agony he prayed *more earnestly*." The prayers of the Church were offered by assemblies of Christians meeting in various private houses (see v. 12), for the persecution would now render public Christian services dangerous, as we know was often the case in the early days of Christianity.

6. *And when Herod would have brought him forth*] Literally, "was about to bring him forth," and this should be expressed, because it is an additional note of the delay and lapse of time between the arrest and the intended punishment.

and the keepers before the door] Read, "and guards before the door," i. e. the two soldiers of the quaternion who were not chained to the prisoner.

7. *And behold, the [an] angel of the Lord came upon him*] The verb is the same which is used (Luke ii. 9) of the angel appearing to the shepherds. The idea conveyed is that the heavenly visitor appeared over those to whom he was sent. The passage just quoted continues "and the glory of the Lord shone round about them," words which are strikingly parallel with this description of St Peter's release, "and a light shined in the prison."

in the prison] The word is not the same as in the last verse. To make the distinction clear read here "cell" or "chamber." The light was due to the presence of the angel who came with the glory of the Lord.

and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up] Rather, roused him up. The verb indicates that he awoke him from his sleep, but not that he helped him to arise.

8. *Gird thyself*] A binding up of the loose Oriental robe, so as to be fit for expeditious movement. Thus the Passover was to be eaten (Exod. xii. 11) as if by persons prepared to depart at once. So Gehazi was bidden (2 Kings iv. 29) to make himself ready for his journey to the house of the Shunammite.

bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And ⁹ he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, ¹⁰ they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to ¹¹ himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered *the thing*, he came ¹² to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Cast thy garment about thee] The Greek word signifies the outer dress as distinguished from the under tunic.

10. *When they were past the first and the second ward*] i.e. the warders, who were stationed one nearer to the inner door of the prison and another at some further distance away.

they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto [into] the city] This description, with the words which immediately follow about the street into which they came, make it probable that the prison in which Peter was kept was in the midst of the city.

which opened to them of his own accord] It is better to discard in sentences like the present the old English form "his" and read "its." "His" was good and almost the only English use when the A. V. was made, but is now obsolete.

For the expression "of its own accord" cp. Lev. xxv. 5, "That which groweth of its own accord;" Wisdom xvii. 6, "A fire kindled of itself," where, as here, what is meant is that there was no human agency employed in what was done.

the angel departed from him] Leaving the other steps, in which supernatural aid was unnecessary, to be taken by the Apostle of himself.

11. *And when Peter was come to himself*] This and other subjective features of the narrative shew that the account must have been derived from St Peter himself. No one else could describe the astonishment and the after realization that all was truly enacted and no vision.

all the expectation of the people of the Jews] Whose gratification at the death of James had been great, and who now hoped to see another of the Apostles put to death.

12. *And when he had considered the thing*] Rather, "when he comprehended it." At first he had been "like them that dream" (Ps. cxxvi. 1) at his deliverance from captivity, but at length his mind grasped the whole truth and he could act upon it.

Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark] This Mary

13—19. *Surprise of the brethren, and anger of Herod.*

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel
 14 came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew
 Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran
 15 in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they
 said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed
 16 that it was *even* so. Then said they, It is his angel. But
 Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the*

was sister to Barnabas, as we learn Col. iv. 10, where Mark is called sister's son to Barnabas. This relationship accounts for the way in which the uncle clung to his nephew, even when St Paul declined to have Mark as a companion on their second proposed missionary journey. We do not read of the father of Mark anywhere, so it is probable that Mary was a widow, and, like her brother, was possessed of means which enabled her to put a house, or a part thereof, at the service of the Church, as a meeting-place for prayer.

gathered together praying] The Greek has "*and praying.*" The introduction of the conjunction seems to indicate not that this was a special or solitary occasion when the disciples were gathered at the house of Mary, but rather that this house was a place in which such gatherings were usual, and at the time when Peter was delivered such an assembly was there and making supplication (v. 5) for his deliverance.

13—19. SURPRISE OF THE BRETHERN, AND ANGER OF HEROD.

13. *at the door of the gate*] The first named is the wicket which was opened for anyone's admission; the second is the porch into which admission was obtained by the small door.

a damsel came to hearken] Perhaps we have here a trace of the danger which at this time surrounded the disciples from this zeal for Judaism on the part of Herod. Saul had entered into every house and carried off men and women to prison (viii. 3), and there was a prospect of a like persecution. So Rhoda was not minded to open till she knew who was seeking for admission.

14. *And when she knew Peter's voice*] We know that his speech was the cause of his being recognized on a previous occasion (Matt. xxvi. 73).

she opened not the gate for gladness] Cp. with this action the description of the disciples (Luke xxiv. 41) when they recognized Jesus, "they believed not for joy."

15. *she constantly affirmed*] i.e. confidently, with determination; which was the old meaning of the word in the A. V. Cp. Frith, *Workes, Life*, fol. 3, "he so *constantly* defended himself, that he had prevailed, if he might have been heard."

It is his angel] The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 14) expresses in part the opinion of the Jews concerning angels when he

door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckon-¹⁷ ing unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, *Go* shew these *things* unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small¹⁸

asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The Jewish belief was that each man had a guardian angel assigned to him. Cp. *Midrash Rabbah* on Eccles. iv. 4, where it is said that "six hundred thousand of the angels of the presence came down on Sinai at the giving of the Law, and each one bore a crown to crown Israel, one for each Israelite." Cp. also our Lord's language (Matt. xviii. 10).

17. *the Lord had brought him out of the prison*] Which had been his exclamation when he came to himself, "The Lord hath sent his angel."

Go shew] There is only one verb in the Greek, which signifies "to bear word." This the A.V. has attempted to render fully by the two verbs.

unto James] This is no doubt the James who is afterwards (xv. 13) described as presiding over the council at Jerusalem concerning circumcision, and giving his sentence on that question. Thus he seems to have been at the head of the Church at Jerusalem, and to him it was natural for Peter to send the first news of his deliverance.

This James must have been either the son of Alphæus or the James who is one of the Lord's brethren, but it is not easy to decide whether the persons called by these names were one and the same. It seems however safest not to identify the Apostle, James the son of Alphæus, with the Lord's brother, for these brethren of Jesus did not believe in Him till a very late period of His ministerial life, long after the twelve were chosen. But the James in our narrative is probably the Lord's brother, because St Paul gives to the James who was one of the pillars of the Church at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 9) when St Paul visited that city, the express title of "the Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 19). This James, bishop of Jerusalem, was, as we learn from a tradition preserved by Eusebius (*H. E.* II. 23), cast down from the pinnacle of the Temple, whither the Jews had brought him, in the expectation that he would disown Christ. When, on the contrary, he still held to his belief, he was thrown down, and not being killed by the fall, was slain by a blow from the club of a fuller.

and to the brethren] Though it was in the middle of the night when his deliverance took place, Peter sends to the various centres where, as in the house of Mary, prayer was also being offered to God for his deliverance.

went into another place] The peril of death was so imminent, if he had been seized, that he takes refuge by hiding where he cannot be found. The times are altered since the day when after his former

19 stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found *him* not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and *there* abode.

20—25. *Death of Herod Agrippa I. Growth of the Church.*

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having

deliverance he could dare to go and speak in the day-dawn to the people in the Temple. Then the populace were a protection to the Church, and saved them from violence of the authorities, now the Jewish people are in expectation of a second execution.

18. *stir among the soldiers*] For the guards who had been chained to the prisoner would discover as soon as they awoke, that he had escaped from between them, and they would know that their lives would probably answer for the life of Peter.

19. *commanded that they should be put to death*] The Greek is literally, "commanded that they should be led forth," implying however that such a proceeding was the prelude to their execution. It is the verb so often rendered "lead away" in the accounts which the Gospels give of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

And he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and there abode] By Caligula there had been conferred on Herod Agrippa the tetrarchies of Herod, Philip and Lysanias mentioned Luke iii. 1. He afterwards received the tetrarchy of Antipas, and was honoured with the title of king. He therefore, and not a Roman governor, was in power at Cæsarea at this date, for Josephus tells us (*Antiq.* xx. 8. 2) that he had received from Claudius Judæa and Samaria, in addition to the districts over which he had ruled under Caligula.

20—25. DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA I. GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.

20. *And Herod was highly displeased*] The oldest MSS. omit *Herod*. Read, "Now he," &c. The verb implies a deep-seated feeling of anger. It is not found elsewhere in the N.T.

with them of Tyre and Sidon] They were still seats of maritime industry, and perhaps Herod's regard for the people of Berytus (*Beyrout*), another Phœnician seaport a little north of Sidon, may have been connected as cause or effect with his anger at the people of the two older cities. Josephus (xix. 7. 5) gives an account of splendid buildings which this king provided for Berytus. It is clear that the way in which the royal anger had made itself felt was one which interfered with the commercial prosperity of Tyre and Sidon.

but they came with one accord to him] i.e. they joined in a common

made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice* of a god, and not of a man. And immediately *the* angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But

embassy and sent persons from both towns to make representations and use their influence to appease Herod's anger.

Blastus the king's chamberlain] Probably, as his name implies, some Roman who had taken office under this Eastern king who rejoiced in the favour of the Roman Emperor.

desired (asked for) peace] We are not to understand from these words that Agrippa was making war on Tyre and Sidon, but only that he was on unfriendly terms with them and was impeding their trade.

nourished by the king's country] The extent of Herod's rule was very great, and if he encouraged another port, and made regulations by which traffic was diverted from the towns of Tyre and Sidon, it was in his power to take away from them at least one-half of the commerce which was their support.

21. And upon a set day] The day was one appointed (as Josephus tells us) for holding a festival on which to make vows for Cæsar's safety.

Herod, arrayed (having arrayed himself) *in royal apparel*] See the extract from Josephus given below.

23. And immediately the (an) angel of the Lord smote him...and he was eaten of worms] Cp. the fate of Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. ix. 9), and Herod the Great's death (Josephus, *Ant.* xvii. 6. 5). The passage in which Josephus describes these events is so important in its bearing on the N. Test. narrative that it deserves to be read in its entirety. He writes (*Antiq.* xix. 8. 2), "Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judæa, he came to the city Cæsarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower, and there he exhibited shows in honour of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons and such as were of dignity throughout his province. On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning, at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflexion of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a dread and shuddering over those that looked intently upon it, and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place and another from another (though not for his good) that he was a god. And they added 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to

mortal nature.' Upon this the King *did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery*. But as he presently afterwards looked up he saw an owl sitting upon a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him; and fell into the deepest sorrow. A violent pain also arose in his belly, having begun with great severity. He therefore looked upon his friends and said, 'I whom you call a god, *am commanded presently to depart this life*, while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I who was called by you immortal *am immediately to be hurried away by death*. But I am bound to accept what *Providence allots as it pleases God*, for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner.' *When he had said this his pain became violent*. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumour went abroad everywhere that *he would certainly die in a little time.....* And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his bowels for five days he departed this "fe."

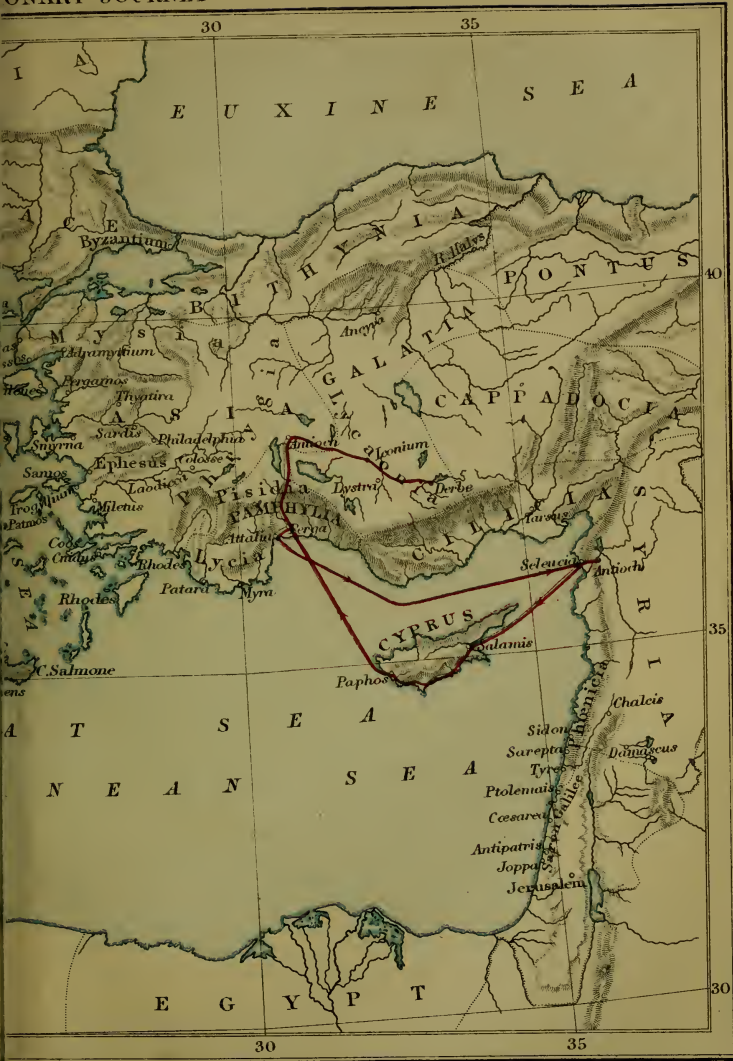
We can see from this extract that among the throng who flattered Herod, there were some who were suing for *mercy* to be shewn to them; that the day was a *set day*, that Herod was *clad in royal robes*, that the flattery consisted in *calling him a god*, that *he did not rebuke* them; that he was *stricken immediately* so that he had to be carried to his palace, that he acknowledged that the *stroke came from God as a rebuke for accepting such flattery*, and everybody expected him to *die at once*.

With reference to the latter portion in which Josephus speaks of a violent pain increasing in vehemence very rapidly, and the N. Test. says he was eaten of worms; it is noticeable that, in the account of the death of Antiochus, already alluded to, we have these two features of the same disease mentioned and that they are described separately. First, 2 Macc. ix. 5, "The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an incurable and invisible plague, for as soon as he had spoken these words a pain of the bowels that was remediless came upon him and sore torments of the inner parts." Then after a verse or two describing the pride of Antiochus we read, "So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man."

Josephus (by whom Herod, as one who favoured Jews, was regarded as of no bad character, and was moreover looked upon with an eye of admiration as having been raised to the highest pitch of power through Roman influence, to which Josephus himself was very ready to pay court) has merely described the form in which the malady made itself apparent at first, and has left out the more loathsome details from the death story of one who in his eyes was a great king; while Holy Writ has given the fuller account, because the object of the writer of the Acts was to emphasize in all its enormity the sin for which Josephus tells us that Herod himself felt that he was stricken. The points of accord in the two accounts are so many, and the difference so slight and so easy to be accounted for, that this extract from Josephus must always be regarded as a most weighty testimony to the historic accuracy and faithfulness of St Luke's narrative. For other instances of death by



ONARY JOURNEY



Stanford's Geog. Estab.

the word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and ²⁵ Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with *them* John, whose surname was Mark.

1—12. *Beginning of Saul's first Missionary journey. He visits Cyprus.*

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen,

this loathsome malady, see Herodotus IV. 205; Eusebius VIII. 16; Tertullian *ad Scapul.* III. A similar account is given of the death of Philip II. of Spain.

24. *But the word of God grew and multiplied*] Cp. vi. 7 and xix. 20. "The seed is the word," said Christ, and so the Christian historian tells us that the word was as seed, when it was cast forth diligently it waxed and brought forth fruit.

25. *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem*] i.e. to their labours among the Gentile converts in Antioch.

when they had fulfilled their ministry [ministration] viz., the giving into the care of the Church the contributions of the disciples in Antioch for the support of their brethren in Judæa during the famine which Agabus had foretold (xi. 28).

John, whose surname was Mark] See above on v. 12.

XIII. 1—12. BEGINNING OF SAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. HE VISITS CYPRUS.

1. *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch*] Rather, "Now there were at Antioch in the church that was there."

We now come to the history of those three great journeys which the Apostle of the Gentiles undertook in his special work. It is fitting that the point of departure should be Antioch, the city in which Gentiles had first in large numbers been joined to the Church, and where as yet there had risen no difficulty about the way in which they were received.

prophets and teachers] Cp. ii. 17. The prophecy of Joel was now to receive a wider fulfilment.

Simeon that was called Niger] The first name points out the man as of Jewish origin, and the second is a Latin adjective = *black*, which may have been assumed, or given to him, as a name from his dark complexion. Jews were, and are still, in the habit of having another name beside their national one, for use when they mixed among foreign nations.

Lucius of Cyrene] This name is Latin, though his birthplace or home may indicate that he was one of the Jews who abounded in Cyrene and the other parts of the North of Africa. Perhaps it is he who is mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21.

Manaen] i.e. Menahem. This name is Jewish, and is found in

which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and
² Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the
 Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the
³ work whereunto I have called them. And when they had
 fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent

Josephus (*Antiq.* xv. 10. 5) as the name of an Essene who foretold that Herod the Great would become king. It may well be that the name became, when the prophecy had received its fulfilment, a favourite one among those who were attached to or favoured the rulers of the Herodian family.

which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch] Rather, “foster-brother of Herod, &c.” The Vulgate gives “*collactaneus*.” Herod the Tetrarch (Antipas) had a brother Archelaus by the same mother. Manaen would hardly be said to have “been brought up with” one brother and not with the other.

The various connections and nationalities of the men who are here named, are worthy to be noticed when we reflect on the work which was to have its beginning from Antioch. One a Cypriote, another a Cyrenian, another a Jew, but from his double name accustomed to mix among non-Jews, one a connection of the Idumean house of Herod, and Saul the heaven-appointed Apostle of the Gentiles, the list may be deemed in some sort typical of “all the world,” into which the Gospel was now to go forth.

2. *As they ministered to the Lord]* The word is the one usually employed by the LXX. for the ministerial services in the Temple, as it is also Heb. x. 11, but the parallelism with the next verse, where the service here mentioned is described as “fasting and *prayer*,” shews us that we are not to attach the former strict signification to it. Such has been the mind of the Church also, for from this verb comes our word “Liturgy.” The old order is giving place to the new, and the terminology is receiving a new sense.

and fasted] as a solemn act of devotion in the prospect of the work which was before them.

the Holy Ghost said] Speaking to and through the prophets who were there.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul] Saul had from the first been a “vessel of election,” and so specially severed for this work, and we can see why Barnabas, who had been the first to introduce Saul to the Church at Jerusalem, and whose education may have been very like his own, (for there was much inter-communication between Cyprus and Tarsus,) was appointed to be the sharer of Saul’s labours.

for the work whereunto I have called them] As the one portion of this admonition was from the Holy Ghost, we may perhaps be warranted in concluding that the whole course of this first great missionary journey was pointed out also by the Spirit. There is no notice of a deliberation in the Church about the best way for the Apostles to set forth.

3. This verse implies a solemn dedication service at the end of the

them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, ⁴ departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached ⁵ the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister. And when they had gone ⁶ through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus: which ⁷

ministration and fasting with which the devotions of the Church had commenced.

^{4.} *sent forth by the Holy Ghost*] A repetition which marks the solemn character which St Luke and also his informant attached to this new form of the Christian work.

unto Seleucia] which was the seaport of Antioch at the mouth of the Orontes. See *Dictionary of the Bible*.

and from thence they sailed to Cyprus] Probably, if not specially directed, the missionary Apostles were induced to take this route because Cyprus was the birthplace of one of them, and there were in the island already many Jews resident, and also some Cypriote Christians (xi. 20), who perhaps had been in Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost among the various nationalities then assembled, and who had, when driven away by persecution, turned their steps homeward and preached Jesus to their fellow-countrymen (xi. 19).

^{5.} *And when they were at Salamis*] Salamis was the nearest port of Cyprus for voyagers from Seleucia. It is at the eastern end of the island in the bay which is now called Famagousta.

in the synagogues of the Jews] who were living in Salamis in sufficient numbers to need several synagogues.

they had also John to [as] their minister] This is John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas. His office may have been to baptize, from which service the Apostles seem to have refrained where it was possible (see above on x. 48). But there is perhaps also implied in the word rendered "minister" some degree of the same service which in old times Elisha rendered to Elijah (2 Kings iii. 11). The same Greek word is used for the minister in a synagogue (Luke iv. 20).

^{6.} *And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos*] Probably teaching at other places in the same way as they had done in Salamis. Paphos was the capital of Cyprus, and therefore the residence of the Roman governor. It was the more modern city, not the old city of Paphos, to which Paul and Barnabas came. See *Dictionary of Bible*.

they found a certain sorcerer [magician], a false prophet, a Jew] That there were living among the Jews persons well known as pretenders to magic powers we can see from a story told T. B. *Berakhoth* 59 a, of a certain Rab Katina who, in his walk, as he was passing the door of one who was known as a professor of witchcraft and magic arts, felt a slight shock of an earthquake. He thereupon called out and asked "Does this wizard diviner know what that shock is?" Upon this the man cried with a sanctimonious promptness worthy of his profession, "In the hour when

was with the deputy *of the country*, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to⁸ hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to⁹ turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also

the Holy One, blessed be He, remembers His children who dwell in sorrow among the nations of the world, He lets fall two tears into the great sea, and that is the cause of the tremor of the earth." Chaldaean astrologers and impostors are mentioned by Juvenal (VI. 562; XIV. 248) and Horace (*Sat.* I. 2. 1) and by many other Latin writers, and these were probably Babylonian Jews. See Lucian, *Necyromantia*, where a wonderful story is told of a magician named Mithrobarzanes. Also Lucian, *Philopseudes*, where one of the wonder-workers is described as "a Syrian from Palestine."

Bar-jesus] This was his Jewish name. The Arabic name or title *Elymas*=wise, was a self-assumed designation; and for that reason he is called "Magus"—the magician, a name originally applied to the Persian priests, who were deemed the *wise* men of the realm both in policy and religion, though their title in after times was degraded to baser arts and persons.

7. *which was with the deputy of the country* [*proconsul*], *Sergius Paulus*] Under Augustus the Roman provinces were divided into two classes, one class of which (needing the presence of troops for their government, and the possession of which gave the Emperor the control of the army) was called imperial, while the others were called senatorial provinces. The former were governed by an officer named *proprator*, the latter by a *proconsul*. We know from Dio Cassius (LIII. 12) that Cyprus was originally an imperial province, and therefore under a *proprator*. This also Strabo confirms (XIV. 685), but says that Augustus made it over to the people along with Cyprus and part of Galatia, and took instead of these Dalmatia for one of his provinces. So that the government was at St Paul's visit held by a *proconsul* for the Roman Senate, as is here recorded; and this is another instance of the historic faithfulness of St Luke's record.

Of Sergius Paulus we know nothing, but the opportunities now afforded, by the English occupation of Cyprus, for the investigation of the antiquities of the island, may lead to some discovery of his name and office in coin or inscription.

a prudent man] The presence of Elymas among his staff shews that the *proconsul* was a man of enquiring mind, and the same is displayed by his desire to hear Barnabas and Saul.

8. *seeking to turn away* [*aside*] *the deputy* [*proconsul*] *from the faith*] Sergius had not yet accepted the doctrine of the Apostles, though we may presume that both he and Elymas had heard much about their teaching since their landing at Salamis. Report going before had roused the *proconsul's* curiosity and the magician's fear, and the wish of the latter was to divert the attention of Sergius, that he might not send for the new teachers.

is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* ¹⁰ child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now ¹¹ behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately

9. *Then [But] Saul, who also is called Paul]* The proconsul had been determined in his purpose, and Saul had come before him. At this point we first meet the name by which the great Apostle is best known throughout the Christian Church, and many reasons have been given why he assumed this name, and why at this time. Some have thought that the name was adopted from the proconsul's, his first convert of distinction, but this is utterly alien to all we know of the character of St Paul, with his sole glory in the cross of Christ. Far more likely is he to have been attracted to it, if it were not his before, by the meaning of the Latin word (*paullus*=little) and its fitness to be the name of him who called himself the *least* of the Apostles. But perhaps he only did what other Jews were in the habit of doing when they went into foreign lands, and chose him a name of some significance (for the Jews were fond of names with a meaning) among those with whom he was about to mix. Dean Howson (*Life and Letters of St Paul*, i. p. 164) compares Jose—Jason; Hillel—Julus, and probably the similarity of sound did often guide the choice of such a name, and it may have been so with the Apostle's selection. St Luke, recognizing that the history of St Paul is now to be his chief theme and that the work for which he was separated was now begun, names the Apostle henceforth only by the name which became most current in the Churches.

filled with the Holy Ghost] So that the punishment inflicted on Elymas was dictated to the Apostle by the Spirit, and he knew from the inward prompting thereof, that what he spake would come to pass.

set [fastened] his eyes on him] For Elymas was standing by, doubtless ready to catch at anything which he might be able to turn to the discredit of the Apostles.

10. *enemy of all righteousness]* We may judge from this expression that St Paul recognized an earnest zeal for truth in the enquiries of the proconsul, and that his wrath against Elymas was not only for what he was doing at the present time, but for his long-continued leading astray of those who were desirous to know the ways of the Lord.

11. *the hand of the Lord]* Of the Jehovah whose ways he had perverted, for it could only have been after the Jewish faith that Sergius Paulus had made his enquiries of Elymas, who instead of teaching him to know the Lord, seduced him by his own pretensions. For the expression cp. Exod. ix. 3 and Judges ii. 15, "The *hand of the Lord* was against them for evil."

for a season] The punishment inflicted on Elymas is lighter than that of Ananias and Sapphira, because in their case the hypocrisy of their

there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about
 12 seeking *some* to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy,
 when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at
 the doctrine of the Lord.

13—15. *The Apostles visit Pamphylia and Pisidia. Mark
 returns to Jerusalem.*

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos,
 they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing
 14 from them returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed

conduct would have brought ruin on the Church, if it had not been
 severely punished, and their sin was against greater light and gifts of
 grace than had been bestowed on the magician of Cyprus.

a mist and a darkness] There is a gradation in the words which
 implies that the withdrawal of his sight was somewhat gradual. At first
 the eyes began to cloud over, and as the film increased upon them he
 became quite blind.

and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand] As he per-
 ceives the darkness closing in upon him he turns in the direction where
 he had last noticed some friend, and endeavours to get a guide. For
 such a man would wish to shew as little as possible how exactly the
 Apostle's words had come to pass.

12. *Then the deputy [proconsul], when he saw what was done, be-
 lieved*] He was convinced by the miracle and by the words with which
 it was accompanied, that the Apostles were teachers of the way of the
 Lord after which he had been seeking in vain from Elymas. We are
 not told that Sergius was baptized, but we have other instances of the
 like omission of notice (see v. 48), yet as baptism was the appointed
 door into Christ's Church, such omission of the mention thereof should
 not be thought to warrant us in believing that the sacrament was neg-
 lected on any occasion.

13—15. THE APOSTLES VISIT PAMPHYLIA AND PIDIDIA. MARK
 RETURNS TO JERUSALEM.

13. *Now when Paul and his company*] Literally, "those around
 Paul." Henceforth the Apostle of the Gentiles becomes the central
 figure in nearly every scene of the Acts.

loosed [sailed] from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia] They
 would sail to the north-west. Pamphylia was about the middle part of
 the southern seaboard of Asia Minor, and Perga was its capital. We
 are not told of any missionary labours in Perga at this time either
 because there was no opening for their commencement, or it may be that
 the Apostles were troubled at the departure of Mark. They did preach
 in Perga on their return visit (xiv. 25).

and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem] There is no
 reason given for his departure either here or elsewhere, but the cause as-
 signed had clearly not been one which satisfied St Paul (xv. 38). John

from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And ¹⁵ after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have *any* word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16—41. *Paul's speech at Antioch.*

Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, ¹⁶

Mark, most probably the same person as the writer of the second Gospel, afterwards was an earnest labourer for Christ, and St Paul (Col. iv. 10) speaks of him with affection. If St Luke knew the cause of his present withdrawal, the remembrance of his subsequent zeal sealed his lips on the subject. Cp. x. 48, note.

14. *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia*] Better, "But they having passed through from Perga, came," &c. Pisidia lay inland to the N. of Pamphylia, and Antioch was in its extreme northern part, so that the verb "passed through" is very correct, for they crossed the whole district. Dean Howson (*Life and Epistles of St Paul*, i. 175) suggests that it was perhaps in this journey that St Paul and his companion were exposed to those "perils of robbers" of which he speaks 2 Cor. xi. 26. Pisidia was a mountainous district rising gradually towards the north, and the quotations given by Dr Howson from Xenophon and Strabo shew that there was a great deal of brigand-like life there even in these times, from which Paul and his company may have been in danger.

and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down] Though he is the Apostle of the Gentiles it is ever to the synagogue that St Paul first finds his way. For the law of Moses ought to be a better schoolmaster to bring men to Christ than the law of nature.

15. *And after the reading of the law and the prophets*] For the better understanding of what was here done, and also at the time when our Lord "stood up for to read" in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16), it seems worth while to give a somewhat detailed account of the manner in which the Law and the Prophets are read by the Jews¹.

the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them] They having the control of the arrangements for calling up readers and preachers.

Ye men and brethren] Read "Brethren," see i. 16.

if ye have any word of exhortation for the people] Barnabas was called (iv. 36) "Son of exhortation," where there is the same word in the original as here. The purport of the "word of exhortation" is well seen in Heb. xiii. 22, where the writer calls his whole Epistle by that name.

16—41. PAUL'S SPEECH AT ANTIOCH.

16. *beckoning with his hand*] Cp. xii. 17, where it is explained that the gesture is to procure silence.

¹ See Excursus at the end of the Chapter.

- 17 Men of Israel, and *ye* that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when *they* dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought he them out of it.
- 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners
- 19 in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to
- 20 them by lot. And after that he gave *unto them* judges about *the space of* four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the
- 21 prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe

Men of Israel, and ye that fear God] The audience consisted of born Jews and proselytes as well as perhaps some Gentiles. See *vv.* 42 and 43. When the audience and the subject and the end aimed at are so entirely in accord on all three occasions we cannot be surprised that the address of St Paul at Antioch partakes largely of the character and also of the language of those of St Peter at Pentecost and St Stephen in his defence. St Paul had heard the last of these, and the vision on the way to Damascus had taught him to speak with boldness on the truth of the resurrection.

17. *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers*] He commends his words to their hearing by dwelling on the historic facts of their national life as God's chosen people.

18. *suffered he their manners in the wilderness*] This expression has the highest MSS. support. Yet the change of one letter in the Greek verb (reading *ἐτροφοφόρησεν* for *ἐτροποφόρησεν*) introduces a sense so much more beautiful, and at the same time so thoroughly in accord with the O. T. history and language, that it commends itself for acceptance above the Received Text. The rendering of the modified reading which has the support of many ancient authorities would be "he bare them as a nursing father in the wilderness." This is the expression in Deut. i. 31, where the LXX. have the Greek verb which this slight change would bring in here. There is no such close parallel found in the books of Moses for "he suffered their manners."

19. *seven nations*] They are enumerated (Deut. vii. 1) before the people went over the Jordan, viz. the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

In the latter part of this verse and in the next the oldest authorities read, "He gave their land for an heritage, about the space of four hundred and fifty years; and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet." This text would carry back the possession of the land to the first promise thereof at the time when Abram was called, for according to the received chronology about four hundred and fifty years elapsed between that event and the death of Joshua.

On Samuel, as *the prophet par excellence*, cp. iii. 24 note.

21. *Saul....., a man of the tribe of Benjamin*] And to the speaker

of Benjamin, *by the space of* forty years. And when he had²² removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this *man's*²³ seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: when John had first preached before his²⁴ coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled *his* course, he said, Whom²⁵ think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh *one* after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose. Men *and* brethren, children of the stock²⁶ of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell²⁷ at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, himself the same words applied. The forty years duration of Saul's reign is only to be gathered indirectly from Holy Writ, but Josephus (*Antiq.* vi. 14. 9) expressly states that time as the length of his reign, and as Ishbosheth, Saul's son, whom Abner set on the throne after his father's death, was forty years old when he began to reign (2 Sam. ii. 10), we may conclude that the length assigned in the text is correct.

22. *I have found David, &c.*] This sentence is a combination and adaptation from two separate verses out of the O. Test. First, "I have found David my servant," Ps. lxxxix. 20, and "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people," 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

23. *Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus*] The word "*his*" has no place in the Greek text, and the oldest MSS. for "*raised*" read "*brought*."

The promise alluded to here is preserved for us in Ps. cxxxii. 11, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy seat," and in many other similar declarations in the prophets. Cp. Zech. iii. 8—9.

24. *the baptism of repentance*] Cp. Mark i. 4.

25. *Whom think ye that I am?*] The oldest MSS. give "*What think ye that I am?*" For John's words, see John i. 20, 27; Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16.

26. *Men and brethren*] Read "Brethren," see i. 16, note.

to you is the word of this salvation sent [forth] The oldest MSS. read "to us, &c.," and this is quite in accord with the language of v. 17, "God chose *our* fathers." The Apostle through the whole address avoids, as far as may be, wounding any Jewish prejudice and so classes himself with his hearers where the subject allows him to do so.

27. *they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not*] Cp. the very similar language of St Peter at the Temple gate (iii. 17), "I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did also your rulers."

nor *yet* the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. And though they found no cause of death *in him*, *yet* desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their

28. *they found no cause of death in him*] These words are a part of the declaration of Pilate (Luke xxiii. 22).

29. *all that was written of him*] The Greek is rather more full, "all the things which were written of him," meaning the various prophecies which received their fulfilment in the betrayal, harsh treatment, and the other circumstances that attended on the death of Jesus.

30. *But God raised him from the dead*] This was the proof that God had now fulfilled the promise made unto Abraham and to David, that of their seed should one come, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, even as St Paul says below, by being justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. And elsewhere (Rom. i. 4) the Apostle says that Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*."

31. *them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem*] The Apostles, and the body of Christ's followers, were drawn from Galilee, insomuch that, before the Crucifixion, Galilæans was a name by which they were known (Mark xiv. 70).

who are his witnesses unto the people] The oldest MSS. read "who **now** are, &c." St Paul has not mentioned the ascension of Jesus, but the addition of this word implies that He was no longer on earth that men might see Him. The Apostle also thus marks out what was the especial work of those who had been with Christ during His life.

32. *And we declare unto you glad tidings*] While the first companions of Jesus are His witnesses, we are His Evangelists, the bringers of good news.

how that the promise, &c.] Better, "of the promise," making this the direct object of the preceding verb.

33. *God hath fulfilled the same*] Better, "how that God hath," &c. The "glad tidings" are concerning the promise, and the precise message which is the cause for gladness is contained in the announcement that the promise has been fulfilled.

hath fulfilled] The verb in the original is a strengthened form and indicates "complete fulfilment."

unto us their children] The Greek order of the words is emphatic,

children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid

“unto their children, even us.” There are some good MSS. which read “unto our children,” but this weakens the language greatly, for what the audience whom St Paul addressed would desire was a fulfilment for themselves. Their children would inherit what they received, but a promise to be fulfilled to their children would not move them so much as one of which they were to be sharers themselves.

in that he hath raised up Jesus again] i. e. from the dead. This is necessary to the Apostle’s argument, which is on the resurrection of Jesus as a proof that He was the Messiah. The quotation which follows need not refer alone to the birth of Jesus into this world. He was also the first-begotten from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept.

as it is also written in the second psalm] The reading of many good MSS. is “in the **first** psalm.” What we now call the first psalm was formerly regarded as an introduction to the whole and not counted in the numbering. The quotation which follows is, according to the present order of the Psalms, taken from Ps. ii. 7.

34. *he said on this wise*] Better, “He [i. e. God] hath spoken on this wise.” The words are from Is. lv. 3.

I will give you the sure mercies of David] Rather, “I will give you the holy and faithful (*mercies*) of David.” There is no word for “mercies” in the original; but the word rendered “holy” is one which the LXX. have frequently used to represent the Hebrew word for “mercies.” St Paul to the audience at Antioch used the Greek version, though no doubt he carried along with him the thought of the Hebrew. But having this Greek rendering as an interpretation of the “everlasting covenant” of which Isaiah speaks in the verse here quoted, he connects the “*holy* and faithful things of David” with that verse of David’s Psalm (xvi. 10) which tells how God will not give his *Holy One* to see corruption.

35. *Wherefore he saith*] Better, “**Because** he saith.” These words of Ps. xvi. which David was inspired to utter cannot refer to David, and this St Paul proceeds to shew. Cp. ii. 29—31 notes.

36. *For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep*] It is possible to render the Greek, “For David, after that in his own generation he had served the will of God, fell on sleep,” but the A. V. seems better. For it must be borne in mind that the contrast which most aids the Apostle’s argument is that, while David’s services could benefit only those among whom he lived, and could not be

37 unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God
 38 raised *again*, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you
 therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this *man* is
 39 preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all
 that believe are justified from all *things*, *from* which ye
 40 could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware there-
 fore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the
 41 prophets; Behold *ye* despisers, and wonder, and pe-
 rish: for I work a work in your days, a work which
 you shall in no wise believe, though a man de-
 clare it unto you.

42—52. *Further preaching both to Jews and Gentiles.
 Jealousy of the Jews, and expulsion of the Apostles from
 Antioch.*

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the

extended to other generations, Christ by His resurrection, never more to die and see corruption, is a Saviour for all generations, and remission of sins through Him can be promised to every one that believeth.

38. *the forgiveness of sins*] Just as Jesus in His lifetime on earth declared that His miracles were only signs that “the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,” so the Apostles preach concerning the Resurrection. Cp. x. 43, the conclusion of St Peter’s speech in the house of Cornelius.

40. *lest that come upon you*] viz. a moral and spiritual overthrow as great as the destruction which the Chaldæans and Nebuchadnezzar wrought upon the land and people at the time of the Babylonish captivity to which the prophecy (Hab. i. 5) quoted in the next verse refers.

41. *Behold ye despisers*] This is the rendering of the LXX. and some other versions. The Hebrew text gives, as A.V., “Behold, ye among the heathen.” The LXX. either had, or thought they had, a different text.

a work which you shall in no wise believe] It is the result of long-continued evil-doing that those who live in it grow incredulous and proof against all warnings. Their hearts are allowed to wax gross and their ears to become dull of hearing.

42—52. FURTHER PREACHING BOTH TO JEWS AND GENTILES.
 JEALOUSY OF THE JEWS, AND EXPULSION OF THE APOSTLES
 FROM ANTIOCH.

42. *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought, &c.*] The oldest MSS. give, “And as they were going out of the synagogue they besought, &c.” The desire was expressed by the congregation both of Jews and proselytes as they left the synagogue.

Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blas-

We do not read of the Gentiles joining the throng of listeners until the next Sabbath (v. 44).

that these words (tidings)] The whole declaration of the Christian faith. It is not the ordinary Greek term for "word." Cp. x. 37.

the next sabbath] The Greek words differ from those below in v. 44, and have been rendered by some "during the intervening week." As is pointed out in the Excursus on v. 15, the Jewish congregations had a portion of the Law read in the synagogues not only on the Sabbath, but on the Monday and on the Thursday mornings, that they might not be for three days without hearing the Scripture. The peculiar expression in this verse may apply to the meetings in the synagogue on those days, and that then the people desired to hear once more the message which St Paul had just preached to them. As a different expression is used so immediately, for "on the next Sabbath," it is but just to suppose that the historian had some reason for the variation of his language in the two verses.

43. *religious* (devout) *proselytes*] Perhaps applied to the proselytes of righteousness as distinguished from the proselytes of the gate.

persuaded them to continue in the grace of God] as Barnabas in like circumstances had urged on the converts at Antioch in Syria (xi. 23). Here, though we have no mention of actual converts, the Apostles must have had regard to the "purpose of their hearts" when they spake to these enquirers as though they were already "in the grace of God."

44. *almost the whole city*] Shewing that the Apostles must have been diligently labouring both among Jews and Heathen during the intervening days, and giving additional probability to the explanation suggested above on v. 42.

45. *they were filled with envy* (jealousy)] The exclusive spirit, which was so engrafted in the Jewish race, asserted itself as soon as they saw the Gentiles gathered to hear the Apostles. The teaching of men who would admit all mankind to the same privileges, was abhorrent to them. For themselves and for proselytes they could accept a message as God-sent, and tolerate some modifications in their teaching and practice, but they could not endure that the Gentiles should be made equal with God's ancient people.

contradicting and blaspheming] The first two words are omitted in the oldest texts. See for similar conduct of the Jews at Corinth under like circumstances, xviii. 6.

46 pheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from *you*, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to
 47 the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of
 48 the earth. And when the Gentiles heard *this*, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many
 49 as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of
 50 the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the

46. *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you*] That, as Christ came first unto His own, so His messengers should declare their glad tidings first unto Jews, but if they received not the word, then it was to be proclaimed to all who would receive it.

judge yourselves unworthy] i.e. pronounce the sentence upon yourselves by your actions. Cp. Matt. xxii. 8, "They that were bidden" to the marriage supper "were not worthy." They had been deemed worthy by him who sent to call them, but had declared they were not so by their refusal to come.

47. *so hath the Lord commanded us*] And the Lord's command which the Apostle quotes is from Isaiah xlix. 6, which shews that from the prophetic times the reception of the Gentiles was made manifest in the counsels of God. Whether the words of Isaiah are referred to himself or to Christ it is clear that, along with the Jews, the Gentiles also are to be recipients of the promised blessings.

48. *and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*] In the controversies on predestination and election this sentence has constantly been brought forward. But it is manifestly unfair to take a sentence out of its context, and interpret it as if it stood alone. In v. 46 we are told that the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, and all that is meant by the words in this verse is the opposite of that expression. The Jews were acting so as to proclaim themselves unworthy; the Gentiles were making manifest their desire to be deemed worthy. The two sections were like opposing troops, ranged by themselves, and to some degree, though not unalterably, looked upon as so arranged by God on different sides. Thus the Gentiles were ordering themselves, and were ordered, unto eternal life. The text says no word to warrant us in thinking that none could henceforth change sides.

50. *the devout and honourable women*] The conjunction is omitted in the best texts. Read, "the devout women of honourable estate." We read that in Damascus, and we may suppose that it was likely to be the case in other large towns and cities in which Jews abounded, the wives of the men in high position among the heathen were much

chief *men* of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But ⁵¹ they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and ⁵² with the Holy Ghost.

inclined to the Jewish religion (Josephus, *B. J.* II. 20. 2). These would be easily moved by the Jews to take action against the Apostles.

and the chief men of the city] As the Jews in Jerusalem had appealed to Pilate and the Roman power to carry out their wishes at the Crucifixion, so the Jews in Antioch excite their heathen magistrates against Paul and Barnabas.

out of their coasts] i.e. "from their borders." Antioch and all Pisidia was inland. But the old English "coast" was used for any borderland, and not as now for the "sea-board."

51. shook off the dust of their feet against them] This significant action, like that of the "shaking of the raiment" (xviii. 6), implied that those against whom it was done were henceforth left to go their own way. Cp. Neh. v. 13, Matt. x. 14.

Iconium] a city in Pisidia to the east of Antioch. It is still a large town, and preserves the trace of its old name, being now called *Koniëh*. See *Dictionary of the Bible*.

52. the disciples were filled with joy] Rejoicing in accordance with the Lord's exhortation (Matt. v. 12) when men reviled and persecuted them, which was the very treatment which they had received in Antioch.

ON THE JEWISH MANNER OF READING THE SCRIPTURES.

The Jewish division of the Scriptures is (1) the Law, i.e. the five Books of Moses. (2) The Prophets, under which title the Jews include Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets. (3) The Hagiographa, containing Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the two Books of Chronicles. The command which enjoins the reading of the Pentateuch is found Deut. xxxi. 10, "At the end of every seven years in the solemnity of the year of release in the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women and children and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear."

This appointment which prescribes the reading of the *whole* Pentateuch on the Feast of Tabernacles was probably soon found to be impracticable, and it is not unlikely that from a very early time the people arranged to

read through the Pentateuch in seven years by taking a small portion on every Sabbath, beginning with the Sabbath after the Feast of Tabernacles in one year of release, and ending with the Feast of Tabernacles in the next year of release. Thus would they in some sort be fulfilling the commandment. That such an early subdivision of the Pentateuch into small portions took place seems likely from what we know of the later arrangements for the reading of the Law. The existence of such a plan for reading would account for *some* of the divisions which exist (otherwise unexplained) in various copies of the Jewish Law.

For (1) we learn (T. B. *Megillah* 29 b) that the Jews of Palestine broke up the Pentateuch into sections for each Sabbath in such a manner as to spread the reading thereof over three years (and a half?). They arranged no doubt that the concluding portions of their second reading should be on the Feast of Tabernacles in the year of release; and they began again on the following Sabbath. In this way they read through the whole Law twice in the seven years, and by concluding it on the Feast of Tabernacles in the year of release observed the commandment¹, and hereby may be accounted for some other of the unused subdivisions of the copies of the Jewish Law.

2. The Babylonian Jews in the 4th century after Christ, and probably much earlier, and all Jews down to this day, have the Pentateuch so divided that it is read through *once* every year, such reading beginning on the Sabbath after the Feast of Tabernacles, and concluding on the so-called last day of that Feast in the next year, the day really being the day of "rejoicing in the Law" (*simkhash Torah*). Thus they bring their reading to an end in each year, and so of course in the release-year, on the day appointed, and observe the command in this manner.

This comparatively modern, though almost universally prevailing arrangement, accounts for the present larger divisions of the Law for reading, and these divisions have each of them its proper name. For the whole Pentateuch has 54 weekly portions, one for each Sabbath. No year however contains 54 Sabbaths, and beside this, some festivals (or rather, holy convocations) may fall on the Sabbath, and when that happens the Scripture appointed for the festival is read, and not the appointed weekly portion in its sequence. In order that the whole Law may still be read through on the Sabbaths, it is provided that occasionally two weekly sections are combined and read on one Sabbath².

These weekly sections of the Pentateuch (*Parshioth*) are each divided into seven portions, and seven readers are called up from the congregation. These are to be (1) an Aaronite (and if such be in the congregation he may not be passed over), (2) a Levite, (3) five ordinary Israelites. These must all be males and at least 13 years and one day old. Practically, in Europe at least, though these are still called up in the congrega-

¹ This arrangement is still observed partially in the Jewish "Temple" at Hamburg, founded in 1818, and there is at this moment (see *Jewish Chronicle*, Feb. 7, 1879) a movement on foot for introducing a similar arrangement in the West London Synagogue of British Jews.

² Of course there will be less need for this arrangement in an intercalated year, which will have four sabbaths extra.

gations, they do not themselves read, but a reader is appointed to read to them. There are congregations in which as a mark of honour more than seven are called up, but this is discountenanced by some Rabbis as likely to lead to abuses.

When the reading of the Law in this manner is concluded the seventh section or part thereof is repeated, and any person may be asked to do this. Such reader is called *Maphtir*, i.e. the Haphtarist (the person whose reading terminates the reading of the Law). With this is connected the subsequent reading of the selected portions of the Prophets.

In olden times the Haphtarist was also the person invited to be the preacher, and this must have been the position occupied by St Paul at Antioch, and by Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth.

The sections of the prophets selected for Sabbath reading and called *Haphtaroth* have always some bearing upon the appointed portion of the Law for that Sabbath, e.g. with the first section of Genesis (Gen. i. 1—vi. 8), which contains the account of the Creation, there is appointed as the prophetic reading the passage (Isaiah xlii. 5—21) which begins "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens," &c. With the next section of the Law, which contains the history of Noah (Gen. vi. 8—xi. 32), the prophetic reading is Isaiah liv. 1—10, in which passage is found "This is as the waters of Noah unto me." The next section of the Law (Gen. xii. 1—xvii. 27) contains the history of Abraham, and the reading from the Prophets begins with Isaiah xl. 27—xli. 16, and in the passage there occurs "Who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to his foot," &c., and a like arrangement is observed throughout the year.

On the Sabbath afternoons the Jews in their synagogues read, to three people, the first seventh of the portion of the Law which is set apart for the following Sabbath, and do so again on Monday and Thursday mornings. So that during the week this part is read four times over.

No prophetic portions are read along with this, but (T. B. *Shabbath* 116 b) in the old times, as early as the commencement of the 3rd century, we find that on the Sabbath afternoons portions of the Hagiographa were read along with this smaller section of the Law, and we cannot doubt that the same principle would be observed in their selection, and that passages similar in character to the selections from the Pentateuch would be chosen in these cases also, though we have no indication what they were¹.

Festivals and Fasts had their own portions of the Pentateuch appointed, and therewith corresponding portions of the Prophets.

On quasi-festival Sabbaths the ordinary portions of the Law were read, but beside this occasionally other additional portions of the Law were chosen for the Haphtarist to read with reference to the festival, and instead of the usual prophetic section appointed for these days, such passages from the Prophets were chosen as bore on the nature of the quasifestival.

These quasi-festivals are

- (1) Should the Sabbath be (a) the day before the New Moon, or (b) the day coincident with the New Moon.

¹ Thus would be accounted for many still unexplained divisions in the Hagiographa.

Partaking of the character of a quasi-festival there is also the so-called "great Sabbath¹," which is the Sabbath that precedes the Passover. On this day the portion of the Law to be read is neither varied nor increased, but as in (1) the appointed Haphtaroth is changed for one of a suitable character. The same sort of change of the Haphtaroth, but not of the portion of the Law to be read, takes place for the Sabbath between New Year and the Day of Atonement (1—10 of the month Tishri).

- (2) The Maccabæan festival of the Dedication, which as it lasted for 8 days might include two Sabbaths.
- (3) Four semi-festivals which are in one string.
 - a. The Sabbath preceding the New Moon of Adar, or coincident with that New Moon. This is called *Shekalim* (=the shekels), and the special portion of the Law then additionally read is Exod. xxx. 11—16.
 - b. The Sabbath before Purim (the Haman-festival) called *Zacor* =remember, for which the special additional portion of the Law is Deut. xxv. 17—19.
 - c. The Red Heifer Sabbath. This is a moveable semi-festival, but must fall between (b) and (d). It is a preparation of Purification for Passover, and its special additional portion of the Law is Numb. xix.
 - d. *Ha-Khodesh*=the month. The Sabbath preceding or coincident with the New Moon of Nisan, for which the special portion of the Law is Exod. xii. 1—20.
- (4) To the above six must be added two Sabbaths if they fall in the middle holidays of the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, for such Sabbaths are even of a higher dignity than the other quasi-festivals.
- (5) The three Sabbaths before the commemoration of the destruction of the city and Temple (1) by Titus, even as before, (2) by Nebuchadnezzar. On these Sabbaths the portion of the Pentateuch appointed for the day is retained, but prophetic portions are selected which suit the circumstances. These are known as the three "Sabbaths [commemorative] of Punishment and Troubles."
- (6) Besides these there are seven Sabbaths called "Sabbaths of Consolation," for which, in the same way, special prophetic passages are read, which must all be chosen from the latter part of Isaiah (chap. xl. and after), and in the last of them probably occurred the passage (Isaiah lxi. 1), read by Jesus at Nazareth². For although at present the Haphtaroth from that chapter is marked to begin at v. 10 there are indications in some MSS.³ that the selected portion

¹ It may be mentioned that the name "great Sabbath" is by the Italian Jews applied also to the Sabbath preceding Pentecost.

² That there is no anachronism, in supposing that these "Sabbaths of Consolation" were observed in our Lord's time, may be inferred from the strict way in which Jewish traditions always identify, in everything but time, the destruction of the two Temples by Nebuchadnezzar and by Titus, and the observances in connection therewith. And we take it as a further proof of the antiquity of this observance that though there are slight variations in the ordinary Haphtaroth in the various Jewish rituals, those for the "Sabbaths of Consolation" are the same in all.

³ See a South Arabian (*Yemen*) Codex, Brit. Museum, MSS. *Oriental*, 1470.

1—7. *Preaching at Iconium. The Apostles forced to flee.*

And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went *both* 14 together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and *also* of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, 2

formerly began at an earlier point, and this for coherence could hardly be elsewhere than at v. 1. It seems probable that in post-Christian times the verses read by our Lord have designedly been cut off from the special prophetic passage. For although any charge against the Jews of altering the *words* of Scripture on account of Christianity must be dismissed as utterly unfounded, it is on the other hand beyond question that they abolished the most ancient and hallowed custom of *reading the ten words* during the morning prayers daily, “because of the murmuring of the heretics” (*minin*), and by this word (*minin*) the Jews meant the earliest Judæo-Christians (T. B. *Berakhoth* 12 a), who, after Christ’s example in the Sermon on the Mount, laid great stress on the ten commandments of the Moral Law to the depreciation of ceremonial regulations.

XIV. 1—7. PREACHING AT ICONIUM. THE APOSTLES FORCED TO FLEE.

1. *they went both together, &c.*] These words probably refer not to one special visit, but to repeated occasions on which Paul and Barnabas appeared as fellow-labourers before the Jewish congregation in Iconium.

and so spake] on various occasions, on some of which not only Jews but Gentiles were hearers of the word.

also of the Greeks] Here the word in the original is *Hellenes*, used in other places by St Luke to signify Gentiles, in contradistinction to *Hellenistæ*, by which he means Greek-Jews. It has been thought that here Greek-Jews can only be intended, and that the word must therefore be used in a sense different from that which it has in other places in the Acts. But clearly the visit of the Apostles to Iconium lasted a considerable time, and it is not to be supposed that, while there, they refrained from speaking the word in any place but in the solitary synagogue. They went, as their wont was, to the synagogue first, that was the scene of their joint labours on many occasions, and there many of the Jews were won to the faith. But they spake elsewhere the same glad tidings which they published to the Circumcision, and thus many Gentiles also were converted. This seems a simpler explanation than to make St Luke say *Hellenes* here, when he means *Hellenistæ*. The verse condenses the account of the Apostolic labours, marks that their commencement was at the synagogue, that Jews became believers, and then without further specification of a place of preaching adds “and of the Gentiles,” to describe the whole result.

2. *But the unbelieving Jews*] Better, “But the Jews that were dis-

and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.
 3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
 4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held
 5 with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and *also* of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone

obedient." The verb is the same which is found John iii. 36, where the rendering should be "He that *obeyeth not* the Son shall not see life." The word is stronger than "unbelieving," it expresses unbelief breaking forth into rebellion, and so exactly describes the character of these Jews who were persecuting Paul and Barnabas.

made their minds evil affected] The verb is an unusual one in this sense. It is that by which the "harm" done to the Church by Herod Agrippa is described (xii. 1). It implies not only an ill disposition aroused towards the brethren, but injury also done to the minds in which the feeling was stirred up.

3. *Long time therefore abode they*] There are two results described in this and the following verse as the consequences of the Jewish opposition. First, a long stay was necessary that by the words of the Apostles and by the mighty deeds following wherewith God confirmed them, the faith of the new converts might be fully established before the Apostles departed. Secondly, there came about a division among the people, the Christians and non-Christians became distinctly marked parties.

speaking boldly] The original word expresses that "freedom of speech" for which the Apostles prayed (iv. 29), and it is to be noted that as in their prayer so in God's working, the freedom of speech is in close connection with the stretching forth of God's hand to heal, and with the signs and wonders that were done in the name of Jesus.

the word of his grace] i. e. the word of the truth of the Gospel, which is glad tidings, a word of grace. It is to be remarked that the signs mentioned here, as elsewhere, follow after the faith and do not precede it.

4. *part held with the Jews, &c.*] For a similar division see the history of the preaching at Thessalonica, xvii. 4—5. That His word should cause such division had been foretold by Jesus (Luke xii. 51).

5. *when there was an assault made*] The noun does not necessarily imply that any direct attack had been made, which, from what follows, we can see was not the case. It rather applies to the excitement, urging, and instigation which the Jews were applying to their heathen companions, and which was likely to end in violence.

with their rulers] The word is of the most general character, and it is impossible to form any conjecture from it what these authorities were.

them, they were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, ⁶ cities of Lycaonia, and *unto* the region that lieth round about: and there they preached the gospel. ⁷

and to stone them] From this we see that the prompting came from the Jews. Stoning was their mode of punishment for blasphemy, and such they would represent the teaching of the Apostles to be. We need not suppose that any regular legal stoning like that of Stephen was intended, or that to accomplish that object the rulers here mentioned were such Jewish authorities as could be gathered together in Iconium, and that they are indicated by a vague term because they had no very settled position. The previous verb "to use them despitefully" rather points to the opposite conclusion, and marks the intended proceeding as a piece of mob-outrage, for which the countenance of any authority was gladly welcomed.

In connection with St Paul's residence at Iconium, there exists a story of the conversion of a maiden named Thecla, of which the apocryphal "Acts of Paul and Thecla" represents the form into which the legend had grown in the fourth century. Thecla, who was espoused to Thamyris, is said to have been deeply affected by the preaching of the Apostle, which she accidentally heard, and when the Apostle was put in prison on the accusation of being a magician, she bribed the gaoler and visited the prisoner, and was fully instructed by him in the Christian faith. The Apostle was punished and sent away from Iconium. Thecla was condemned to die for her refusal to marry Thamyris, but was miraculously saved, and after many troubles joined St Paul in his missionary travels, and ultimately made her home in the neighbourhood of Seleucia, where she led the life of a nun till her death, which took place when she was ninety years old.

This story may at first have had some basis of truth to rest on, but it has been so distorted with inconsistent details, that it is impossible now to judge what the foundation of it may have been.

6. *they were ware of it*] Among the party which sided with the Apostles there would be some who would get information about any attack which was being planned against them. It is to be noticed that throughout the history there is no attempt to exaggerate the sufferings of the Christian teachers. Here was a narrow escape from stoning, and as such it is recorded with no more expansion than is absolutely unavoidable.

and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about] What the Apostles actually did is more truly represented if we preserve the Greek order, "fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about." From the violence of a mob excited by the Jews they fled into a wilder region where were few or no Jews, and the cities are enumerated in the order in which they were visited, while some to which they went are unnamed but included in the general term "the region round about." The flight of the Apostles is exactly in accord with Christ's injunction (Matt. x. 23).

8—18. *Cure of a Cripple at Lystra. The heathen people regard the Apostles as gods.*

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never
9 had walked: the same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly

8—18. CURE OF A CRIPPLE AT LYSTRA. THE HEATHEN PEOPLE REGARD THE APOSTLES AS GODS.

8. *And there sat a certain man*] Perhaps this cripple, like that other in Jerusalem (iii. 2), was brought by his friends to some much-frequented place that he might ask alms of them that passed by. There is no mention of a synagogue in Lystra, and it is very improbable that there was one. The Apostles therefore would seek out some place of public resort where they might proclaim their message, and such a position would also be most adapted for the purposes of a begging cripple.

at Lystra] This place lay almost south from Iconium, if the site generally assigned to it, at the foot of the *Kara-dagh*, be the correct one. See *Dict. of the Bible*. It is most probable that this was the home of Timothy. We cannot conclude this absolutely from xvi. 1, because both Derbe and Lystra are there mentioned, but in xx. 4 we have an enumeration in which are the words "Gaius of Derbe and Timotheus," where the form of the expression makes it almost certain that the latter was not of Derbe. Further, when St Paul recalls to Timothy his sufferings undergone at this period (2 Tim. iii. 10—11), he says "Thou hast fully known.....the persecutions and afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra," words which seem to connect Timothy with the last-named place, and when taken in connection with the other passages to be conclusive that Timothy did not live at Derbe.

That Timothy was made a convert to Christianity at this first visit of St Paul is plain from xvi. 1, where on the Apostle's second visit he is called "a disciple." It is also clear from the same passage (xvi. 3) that there could have been but few Jews at Lystra at this time, or else the son of a religious Jewess would hardly have remained uncircumcised till he had reached man's estate. Some, however, have thought that this may have come to pass through the influence of the Greek father of Timothy.

impotent in his feet, &c.] It is worth while to notice once again how minutely Luke, the physician, describes the nature of this and other maladies throughout the history.

9. *the same heard Paul speak*] The verb in the *Text. recept.* is here the imperfect, but some MSS. have the aorist. The former seems to be the more suitable. What happened was that the Apostles preached on several occasions, and that the lame man was at his station and heard *repeatedly* the teaching of the Gospel, and by his earnest attention and manner indicated that what was spoken had been accepted by him with faith. This attracted the attention of St Paul.

beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. ¹⁰ And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, saying in the speech ¹¹

who stedfastly beholding him (fastening his eyes upon him)] The verb is common with St Luke, and is used several times of St Paul, as in xiii. 9, where he fixes his gaze on Elymas, and xxiii. 1, where he attentively beholds the council. From the context of the latter passage, in which we learn that the Apostle did not recognize the high-priest, some have thought that this straining earnest gaze, so frequently ascribed to St Paul, was due to some weakness of sight remaining ever since his blindness at the time of his conversion.

and perceiving (seeing) that he had faith to be healed] The man's heart shone out in his face, and the Spirit within the Apostle recognized that here was a fit object to be made, by his cure, a sign unto the men of Lystra.

10. *said with a loud voice]* i.e. raising his tone above that in which he was speaking to the rest of the people.

Stand upright on thy feet] It has been noticed in chap. iii. how different is the narration of this miracle from that wrought by St Peter at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The two were of exactly the same character, and had the historian been giving his own words only and aiming at producing a harmony in his picture between the words and works of St Paul and St Peter, no finer opportunity could have been found than by making the narratives in these two places as much as possible alike. A careful perusal leaves the impression that the latter may have been written from personal observation (see below on v. 22) or from the information of St Paul, but that the former was drawn from an entirely different source, and that the historian has faithfully preserved the distinct character of the two sources from which he derived his information.

And he leaped and walked] The oldest MSS. give these verbs in different tenses. The first is aorist, as expressing one act, the upward spring, which shewed once for all that the cure was wrought; the second is imperfect, and indicates that the act of walking was continued, that he henceforth was able to exercise his new power.

11. *in the speech of Lycaonia]* Which would come more naturally to their lips than any other. The people were bilingual, and St Paul had been speaking to them in Greek. This fact may give us some additional light on the question of what the gift of tongues was, which was bestowed upon the Apostles. Clearly, from what we see here, it was not such a power as enabled them at once to understand and converse in the various dialects of all the people into whose countries they might be brought in their missionary labours. For it is manifest that neither Paul nor Barnabas understood the cry of these Lycaonians. If they had, we cannot suppose that they would have allowed a moment to elapse before they corrected the false impression which the words conveyed, and at which, when they came to know its purport, they expressed such horror. They,

of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness
 12 of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul,
 13 Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the
 priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen
 and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice

however, left the place where the multitude of listeners had been assembled, and departed to their own lodgings without any knowledge of what the mistaken people were about to do.

The gods are come down to us] Nothing was more familiar to the heathen mind than the thought of the gods assuming human shape and going about among mankind, and it has often been noticed that the scene of the legend of Baucis and Philemon related by Ovid (*Metam.* viii. 611 seqq.), and in which Jupiter and Mercury are said to have wandered on earth and to have been received as guests by Baucis and Philemon, is laid in Phrygia, which province was close to Lycaonia.

12. *And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius]* Of course this was not known until afterwards, and St Luke in his narrative, as a Greek, gives the Greek names of the gods, *Zeus* and *Hermes*. We can understand how the heathen people concluded that if any deity came to visit them with a beneficent purpose it would be that god Jupiter whose temple was before their city and to whom therefore their chief worship was paid; and Mercury was counted as the principal attendant on Jupiter, and moreover as the god of eloquence. It was obvious, therefore, to assign that name to the chief speaker, and the name of Jupiter to that one of the two Apostles who had the more commanding presence. That St Paul was not such a figure we know from his own words, and tradition describes him as "little in height, with a bald head and crooked legs" (*Acta Apocryph.* p. 41, Tischendorf).

because he was the chief speaker] Literally, "the leader of the speech." This character is always assigned to Mercury by the heathen writers, and almost the very words of the text are used of him by Iamblichus, *de Myst. ad init.*

13. *the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city]* i.e. "whose temple was before their city." He was their tutelar divinity, and it was to his priest that the people ran with their cry, and brought him, with all the preparations for a sacrifice, to the gate of the house where the Apostles were lodged.

brought oxen and garlands] The latter were sometimes put on the heads of the victims, and sometimes used by the worshippers for their own decorations at religious rites. Probably in this case they were meant to make gay some temporary altar.

unto the gates] The word here used in the original is the same which is used for the porch or vestibule of the house of Mary the mother of John Mark (xii. 14), and that is its sense here. The Apostles were within the house, and as it was meet to offer the victims to the supposed gods in their presence rather than on the altar at Jupiter's temple, it was to the house of their host that the procession came.

with the people. *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful sea-

14. *Which when the apostles...heard of*] As they did first from the clamour and excitement of the would-be worshippers.

ran in among the people (multitude)] The best MSS. read "sprang forth among the multitude," and this is no doubt the correct reading. They were horror-stricken at what was contemplated, and with garments rent to shew, by signs as well as by words, their repudiation of such worship, they sprang forth from the house, through the vestibule, and into the midst of the crowd, that they might put an end to the delusion of the people. Cp. 2 Kings xviii. 37, xix. 1.

15. *and preach unto you*] Literally, "bring you the good tidings," as the message must be which sets forth to men the living God in the place of dumb idols.

that ye should turn from these vanities (vain things)] "Vanity" is a name of constant use in the Old Test. for the false gods of the heathen. See 1 Sam. xii. 21.

16. *who in times past (by-gone generations) suffered all nations (all the heathen) to walk in their own ways*] God had chosen Israel only for His own people before the coming of Christ, and had given to the rest of the world no revelation of Himself except what they could read in the pages of the book of nature. But that, St Paul says, spake clearly of a careful creator and preserver of the world.

17. *he left not himself without witness*] This is the same argument which the Apostle employs (xvii. 27) to the more philosophic multitude whom he addressed on Mars' hill. God's natural teaching is meant to speak alike to all men. Cp. also the similar reasoning in Rom. i. 19, 20.

and gave us rain] The oldest MSS. read "gave you," and this is the more natural language, for the Apostle could not include himself among those to whom God's appeal was made through the gifts of nature only.

A few rather unusual words and forms which occur in this verse have suggested to some that we have here a fragment of a Greek poem on the bounties of nature, which the Apostle quotes, as he sometimes does quote the Greek poets, to illustrate his speech from the language familiar to his hearers. Attempts have therefore been made to arrange the words into some dithyrambic metre. But it is hardly probable that St Paul would quote Greek poetry to the people in Lycaonia, to whom

18 sons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that *they* had not done sacrifice unto them.

19—28. *Change of feeling in the multitude. Paul is stoned. The Apostles visit Derbe, and then return, by the route by which they came, to Antioch in Syria.*

19 And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned

Greek was not sufficiently familiar for them to appreciate its literature to the extent which this supposition presumes, and certainly the other quotations which he makes from Greek authors (Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Tit. i. 12) are used to much more cultured audiences.

18. *that they had not done sacrifice unto them*] i.e. "from doing sacrifice," &c.

19—28. CHANGE OF FEELING IN THE MULTITUDE. PAUL IS STONED. THE APOSTLES VISIT DERBE, AND THEN RETURN, BY THE ROUTE BY WHICH THEY CAME, TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

19. *certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium*] Their anger, like that of "the circumcision" in Jerusalem, was roused against the Apostles, whom they knew to be born Jews, but who were casting away the legal restraints to which they themselves clung, and so they followed them to other places and represented them no doubt as renegade Jews, and probably taught the heathen people, that what they had seen done was done by evil powers and not by beneficent ones. Some such argument they must have used. The mighty work of the cured cripple bore witness for the *reality* of the Apostles' power. It was only left, therefore, to ascribe it to evil agency, as the Jews aforetime said of Christ "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub."

who persuaded the people] Dean Howson (*Life and Epp. of St Paul*, I. 208) quotes from the Scholiast on Homer (*Il.* iv. 89—92) a passage in which the Lycaonians are described as untrustworthy, and Aristotle is given as authority for the statement. For a similar sudden change of temper in the populace, cp. the conduct of the multitude at Jerusalem just before the Crucifixion, and the sudden change of opinion in the people of Melita (Acts xxviii. 6).

and, having stoned Paul] Their jealous rage carried them to such a length that they became themselves the active agents in taking vengeance on the "chief speaker" of the two missionaries. This must be the stoning to which St Paul alludes (2 Cor. xi. 25), "Once was I stoned." And Paley (*Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 69) calls attention to the close agreement between the history of St Luke and the letter of St Paul. At Iconium St Paul had just escaped stoning; at Lystra he was stoned. The two circumstances are mentioned by the historian, only the actual suffering by the Apostle himself. Nothing but truth to guide them, says

Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, ²⁰ he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had ²¹ preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned *again* to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch,

Paley, could have brought the two writers so close "to the very brink of contradiction without their falling into it."

drew him out of the city] The stoning had not been in a place set apart for such executions, for there were few Jews in Lystra, but it had been done publicly in the midst of the city, perhaps in the place of public resort where St Paul had been wont to preach.

20. *as the disciples stood round about him*] Among these we may well believe that the young Timothy was included. Braving all danger that might attend on their act, the believers at Lystra gathered about what they deemed the corpse of their teacher, and their sorrowing thoughts were perhaps concerned how they might procure it reverent burial.

he rose up] The Greek conveys the impression that this was as a resurrection from the dead, and that the restoration of the Apostle, and his immediate exhibition of vigour, and boldness to enter again into the city, was the effect of a miracle. That one stoned and left for dead by a savage mob should revive and go about as if nothing had befallen him must have been a still more striking evidence of the mighty power of God present with these teachers than what the people had seen before in the restoration of the cripple.

and the next day he departed] Having been sheltered for the night in the house of some disciple, perhaps in that of Eunice and Lois, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, of whose faith the Apostle speaks (2 Tim. i. 5) as one who has been witness of its fruits in their lives.

with Barnabas to Derbe] Barnabas had not been an object of jealousy of the Jews. His power, though great as the "son of exhortation or consolation," was not so demonstrative as that of his fellow-Apostle. Derbe, the town to which the Apostles next went, was to the east of Lystra. We have no mention of any other places in Lycaonia than these two as visited by Paul and Barnabas, but from v. 6 we gather that their preaching was extended to other parts of the surrounding country.

21. *and had taught many*] Better, "and had made many disciples." Perhaps "Gaius of Derbe," whom St Luke mentions as one of Paul's companions in a subsequent journey (xx. 4), may have been one of these. This is the more probable because he is there mentioned in the same clause with Timothy, who undoubtedly was converted by St Paul during this visit to Lycaonia.

they returned again] Going back over the ground which they had travelled before, that they might provide for the spread of that seed of the word which they had imperilled themselves so greatly to sow.

22 confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting *them* to
 23 continue in the faith, and that we must through much tri-
 23 bulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they
 had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed
 with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom
 24 they believed. And after they had passed throughout Pi-
 25 sidia, they came to Pamphylia. And when they had
 preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:
 26 and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been
 recommended to the grace of God for the work which they

22. *confirming the souls of the disciples*] The strengthening indicated by this word is that which Peter was charged to afford to his fellow-disciples. "When thou art converted *strengthen* thy brethren," i.e. by warnings and exhortations drawn from thy own trials and thy deliverance from them. We see that this was the purport of St Paul's charge to the Churches.

and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God] From the use of the pronoun "we" in this sentence some have thought that, although unmentioned, the writer of the Acts was present with Paul and Barnabas in this first missionary journey as well as in the others. St Luke only indicates his presence at Troas and elsewhere in the same manner (xvi. 10—12, &c.), though in those passages the mention is more conclusive than in the verse before us.

23. *elders in every church*] i.e. men who should have the oversight, and care for the growth, of these infant Churches.

and had prayed with fasting] using the same solemn service at the dedication of these men to their duties which had been used when they were themselves sent forth from Antioch for their present labour (xiii. 3).

they commended them to the Lord] Cp. St Paul's parting commendation of the elders of Ephesus who had come to meet him at Miletus (xx. 32). The Lord was able here also to build these men up, and to give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

25. *when they had preached (spoken) the word in Perga*] which they do not appear to have done when they passed through it before. See xiii. 13, 14, note.

Attalia] A seaport of Pamphylia, at the mouth of the river Catarhactes. For its history see *Dictionary of the Bible*. The Apostles had sailed, as they came from Paphos, directly to Perga, which they reached by coming some way up the river Cestrus. Now they go by land from Perga to the seacoast at Attalia, where there was more likelihood of finding a vessel in which they could sail into Syria.

26. *from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God*] Better, "had been commended." The verb is not the same as in v. 23, but the sense is. The old English verb "recommended" had the meaning which now belongs only to "commend."

fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened *the* door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

27. *and had gathered the church together*] i.e. the Christian congregation at Antioch who had been moved by the Spirit (xiii. 2) to send them forth. It was fitting therefore that to them should be made a declaration of the results of the Apostolic mission.

opened the door of faith] i.e. had made faith the ground of admission to His kingdom. It was now no longer through circumcision that men should enter in and be known as God's people, but the Gospel privileges were offered to every one that believed.

28. *And there they abode long time with the disciples*] The oldest MSS. omit "there." Render literally, "And they abode no little time with the disciples." St Paul was naturally more attached to Antioch than to Jerusalem, for here was the centre where Gentiles had first formed a Church, and where consequently he found most sympathy with his special labours.

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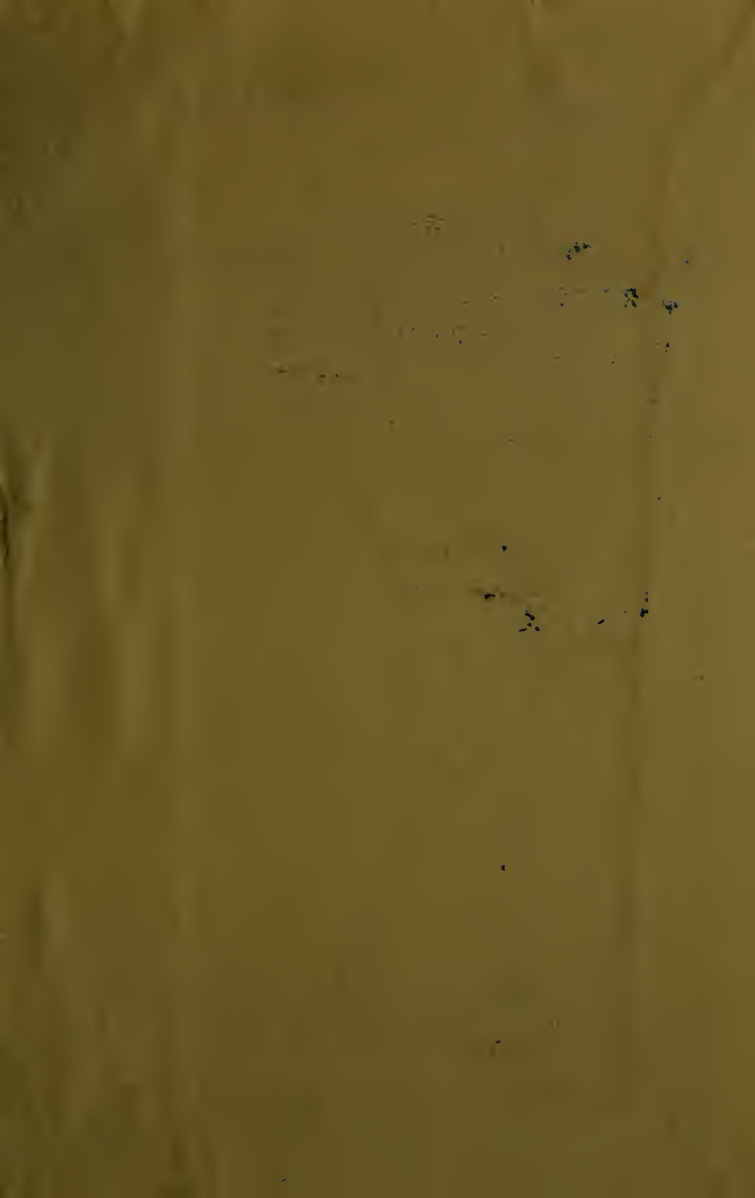
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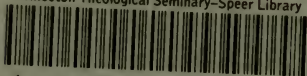
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